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IMPROVING CORPORATE WORSHIP BY INTEGRATING CHORAL
AND CONGREGATIONAL PRAISE AT BEAUTIFUL GATE
CHURCH IN ANNANDALE, VIRGINIA

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Min Hee Lee
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IMPROVING CORPORATE WORSHIP BY INTEGRATING CHORAL
AND CONGREGATIONAL PRAISE AT BEAUTIFUL GATE
CHURCH IN ANNANDALE, VIRGINIA

Min Hee Lee

Read and approved by:

Sanghee M. Ahn (Faculty Supervisor)

Jeffrey K. Walters

Date _____

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PREFACE

The primary task of the church is the worship of God. The church's spiritual power and existence depend on how she worships God. Worship also helps God's people to come close to God. As a music pastor, I, therefore, continued to question how I can give glory to God by worship. This factor led me to the D.Min. program. Finally, I found an example of worship. That was the worship the Book of Revelation describes.

The idea of improving corporate worship by integrating choral and congregational praise soon became my mission. At first, however, it was difficult for me to conduct the project in my church but all church members were soon accustomed to it and followed my directions. As a result, after completion of the project, the worship of Beautiful Gate Church was significantly improved.

There are a number of supporters for the project. First of all, I would like to thank God who guided me through the project. I would also like to thank Beautiful Gate Church's ministers including senior pastor Seongmoo Heo, choir, worship leaders, and church members who filled out surveys and attended several worship and praise seminars. Especially, I deeply want to give thanks to my project adviser, professor Sang Hee Ann. I know that I could not finish my project without his helping and guidance. I eagerly hope to be a music pastor that gives glory to God and helps unbelievers to come to Him by music.

Min Hee Lee

Annandale, Virginia

December 2012

CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

Purpose

The purpose of this project was to improve corporate worship by integrating choral and congregational praise at Beautiful Gate Church in Annandale, Virginia.

Goals

Four goals served as criteria for the evaluation of this project. The first goal was to help the congregation of Beautiful Gate Church take a more enthusiastic part in the praising of God during the worship services by proposing practical and specific procedures.

The second goal was to encourage the members of Beautiful Gate Church to attend not only the worship services, but other church activities as well more frequently. Worship is one of the most important obligations and privileges of believers, yet, many church members do not attend worship services regularly, and one of the major reasons is that some church members feel left out. As the choir and preacher lead the worship service, the congregation is to passively sit and be quiet. This separation of roles during worship leaves many people feel like outsiders, and then, their lack of enthusiasm leads to members' slowly and quietly leaving the church, in search of a more participatory worship service. This portion of the project encouraged the participation of the entire congregation, thus increasing members' presence in all church activities.

The third goal sought to encourage church members' witnessing to non-believers. By working on the first two goals, the church hoped to equip its members with a new sense of urgency and spirit to share the gospel as a witness to the community.

Members can live as witnesses of Jesus Christ. With a renewed sense of the presence of God, they showed the glory of God in their community. The eagerness of church members have come from the joy as they praise the Lord in the new format of worship and encouraged the spreading of the Good News as foretold by the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

The fourth goal of the project was to help church members understand the biblical concepts of praise and worship. This aim can be accomplished through a careful study of the Bible verses related to praise. Led by the Holy Spirit and informed by the Scriptures, church members should then be able to praise God in a way that is pleasing to Him.

Ministry Context

Beautiful Gate Church is located in Fairfax County, Virginia. Fairfax County has the largest number of Korean population and Korean businesses in the Northern Virginia area. For the worship services and other church activities, the church occupies some facilities of Washington Baptist University.

According to the U.S. Census in 2009, the total population of the state of Virginia was 7,882,590. Fairfax County was 1,037,605, which was composed of 72.8 percent Anglo-Saxons (735,661), 9.7 percent African-Americans (100,647), 15.1 percent Hispanics (156,678), and 16.5 percent Asians (171,204). The Korean population was 38,553 which was equivalent to 3.7 percent of the total population of Fairfax County.¹ The median household income of the County was \$1,002, 499, which was much higher than \$71,270 for the state of Virginia.² One can consider Fairfax County as a home of

¹U. S. Census Bureau, "Fairfax County Quick Facts" [on-line]; accessed 24 March 2011; available from <http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov>; Internet.

²U.S. Census Bureau, "2009 American Community Survey" [on-line]; accessed 25 March 2011; available from <https://quickfacts.census.gov>; Internet.

higher education in the state of Virginia.³ One can consider Fairfax County as a home of higher education in the state of Virginia.

According to the U.S. Census in 2009, high school graduates composed of 91.5 percent of the total population of the county, and 58.7 percent of the residents aged 25 or older were college graduates with a bachelor's degree or higher education. For years, Virginia's higher educational institutions have occupied one of the highest levels in the United States, due to their academic achievements.⁴

Christianity is the predominant religion in Virginia. The total population of Christians was 3,134,353, which was equivalent to 40.7 percent of the total population of Virginia as of the year 2009. Baptists compose the largest denominational group with 32.7 percent of the total population of Christians. The second largest group was Roman Catholics which constitute 18.4 percent of the total population of Christians. The third largest group was Methodists with 12.7 percent of the total population of Christians. Presbyterians, Lutherans, Pentecostals, Congregationalists, and Episcopalians each composed 1-5 percent of the total population of Christians as of 2009.⁵ The total number of Korean churches in the Northern Virginia area was 157, which was composed of 101 Presbyterian churches, 34 Baptist churches, 11 Methodist churches, 7 Full Gospel churches, 3 Holiness churches, and 1 Salvation Army church as of 2009.⁶

The history of Beautiful Gate Church began with Seongmoo Heo, a professor of Washington Baptist University, along with four other families. They planted the church together and had the first opening worship service on April 30, 2002. Since then, the

³U.S. Census Bureau, "2009 American Community Survey" [on-line]; accessed 25 March 2011; available from <https://quickfacts.census.gov>; Internet.

⁴Ibid.

⁵Social Explorer, "Religion 2009" [on-line]; accessed 25 May 2011; available from <http://www.socialexplorer.com>; Internet.

⁶*Washington D.C. Korean Business Directory* (Washington D.C.: Korean Times Board, 2011).

membership has increased by 10 people each year, and now the church has a total membership of 130 which includes 90 adults, 15 youths, 20 children, and 5 toddlers, and they are expecting more infants in the near future. Of the 90 adult church members, 30% own private business, 30% are in federal government and sales business, and 40% are engaged in physical labors. Their incomes are almost the same as those of the neighboring church members.

The church slogan is “Let’s stand on God’s side first.” Based on the word of Joshua 5:13-15 where Joshua encountered and asked the army general of God: “you were on our side or on enemies,” Christians must first and foremost be on God’s side, rather than hoping that He will be on our side. The church has six core values. The first is prayer. Church should be filled with the members who pray.

The second is Jesus Christ. Church should be focused on not individuals, but on the name of Jesus. The third is encouragement. Church should be the place where people find encouragement. The fourth is the Holy Spirit. Church should be the place where one feels the abundant presence of the Holy Spirit.

The fifth core value is praise. Church should be the place where everyone is praising God. The last is the Word. Church should teach and obey to the word of God and spread it to non-believers.

One can summarize the current church ministries into the following three categories. The first one is a Korean language school program. The church provides a Korean language school program for the second generations at 8-9 p.m. on Friday. The second ministry is an intercessory prayer meeting. The church provides an intercessory prayer meeting for every prayer request at 10:30-11:00 a.m. on Sunday. The last is a Friday praise meeting. The church provides a praise meeting during the Friday prayer service.

The church has several merits. First, people aged 20-70 constitute the

membership. It is one of many proofs that church is balanced. Second, the church recruits an average of ten new members a year. Most neighboring Korean churches are experiencing a decrease in their membership.

Third, almost all new members were non-believers and became Christians later. The increase of the membership of most neighboring Korean churches was because of the influx from other churches. The last, church ministers have good fellowship with every church member. Most churches were experiencing their splits due to the bad relationship between church ministers and members. One weak point of the church is that its Bible study is not strong.

Two church ministers serve the church: a senior pastor (Seong Moo Heo) and a music minister. I am currently in charge of the following roles as a director of music ministry: (1) conductor of choir; (2) director of small church groups; (3) preacher at the dawn services; and (4) director of visiting and counseling ministry.

The Sunday worship services begin at 8:00 a.m. and 11:15 a. m. The church choir attends the second service at 11:15 a.m.

The total number of choir members is 22: 8 sopranos, 3 altos, 3 tenors, and 8 basses. The choir practices for 50 minutes between 10:15 and 11:05 a.m. on Sunday mornings. They begin with prayer for worship and for others prayer requests before they practice. The age groups of the church choir are 3 in 20's, 4 in 30's, 5 in 40's, and 10 in 50's. Even though it is very hard for them to have a musical harmony, they do their best in unifying.

Rationale

Myeongwhan Kim argued that “praising was designed by God originally.”⁷ As for the importance of praise, Bob Sorge also said, “Now God wants to build churches

⁷Myeongwhan Kim, *Temple of Praising* (Seoul: New Song, 1999), 13.

which are doing meaningful praise in this last time.”⁸ The church praising has, however, become more habitual, stereotyped, and mechanical.

The Bible deals with praise as one of its most important themes. The verses related to the praise occur 400 times in the Old Testament and 50 times in the New Testament. The following three verses emphasize that God himself designed the praising for Himself. The first, Isaiah 43:21 says, “The people I formed for myself that they may proclaim my praise.”⁹ The verse describes the purpose of human beings as the praising to God.

The second, Psalms 148:5 says, “Let them praise the name of the LORD, for he commanded and they were created.” The verse explains the purpose of human beings as the praising to God. The third, Ephesians 1:3 says, “Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ.” The verse regards the purpose of human being’s redemption as the praising to God.

The Bible also says, “You are the praise of Israel” (Ps 22:3). Therefore, praise is one of the most important elements of the Christian worship, where all worshippers have spiritual communion with God. However, the worship of the Beautiful Gate Church lacks live spiritual communion with God. One of the reasons is due to the separation of congregation from the praise of the church choir. In other words, the congregation and the church choir are not in unity while respectively praising God during the worship service. Because of the lack of interest in music by the congregation as a whole, the church is not experiencing the spiritual touches of the Spirit of God.

During special events, such as Easter, Thanksgiving, and Christmas programs, when only the church choir participates in the singing of special songs, the congregation

⁸Bob Sorge, *Worship Full of Praising*, trans. Hyek Choi (Seoul: Duranno, 1997), 25.

⁹Unless otherwise noted, all Scripture quotations are taken from the New International Version.

cannot help but feel like outsiders, due to the lack of spiritual touches and joy the choir receives from participation. If the church choir and the congregation praise God together as one voice, just as all the creatures do in heaven (Rev 5:11-14), the worship would be that of the heavens, which is filled with the presence of the Holy Spirit.

Definitions and Limitations

The purpose of this project was to integrate choral and congregational praising to generate more corporate and spiritual worship. Two terms are identified for this project.

Worship

John Huxtable said, “Christian worship is a dialogue between God and his people.”¹⁰ Donald Macleod, however, gave a more detailed definition of the term “worship” as follows:

Our worship then is the outcome of belief in a God who has done something “for us men and for our salvation,” and the shape of the liturgical act is determined by the nature of the divine work and of our response to it. What we say and what we do therefore on these high occasions will not be whole, nor ever have unity and meaning, if our basic beliefs are biased, short-sighted, or fragmentary. Moreover, the efficacy and quality of our response depends upon the activity in us of the Holy Spirit; for this reason the preparation for worship as individuals in private and as a congregation gathered to hear and receive God’s Word will always be of singular importance.¹¹

Therefore, one can define Christian worship as a dialogue between the Savior God and His redeemed people.

Praising

The Eerdmans Bible Dictionary defines praising as “to honor and ascribe worth to God.”¹² In other words, praising is “the response due to God from all creation

¹⁰John Huxtable, *The Bible Says* (Richmond: John Knox, 1962), 109.

¹¹Donald Macleod, *Presbyterian Worship* (Richmond: John Knox, 1965), 9-10.

¹²Myers, “Praising,” 845.

because of his majesty and saving actions; it is the dominant characteristic of true piety.”¹³

This project had two limitations. To begin with, the length of this project was fifteen weeks: the first two weeks for a survey of satisfaction toward the current worship and praising; a three-week seminars on the biblical worship and praising by a music minister; a four-week practice; a one-week to evaluate the project; a three-week more practice if the new format of praising works; and the last two weeks to survey the satisfactory towards a new format of worship and praising.

The second limitation was the number of the participants in this project. The participants included only 90 adult members. The service time for practices was the second service time (11:15 a.m.), when almost all adult and the youth group attend together.

Research Methodology

The purpose of this project was to improve the worship experience of Beautiful Gate Church. The length of this project was be fifteen weeks. A detailed procedure of research is as follows.

For the first week, the church choir completed a survey after worship service and before fellowship time. For the second week, the church congregation completed a survey at the same time as the choir survey. The congregation included only 90 adult members who attended worship service on a regular basis.

For the third through the fifth week, I, the music minister, gave some seminars. I majored in church music at college, and I have been as a music minister for the last thirty years. For the third week, I gave the church choir a seminar on the biblical worship for 30 minutes before their practice on Sunday morning.

¹³Ibid.

For the fourth week, I also gave the choir a seminar on the biblical praising for thirty minutes before the weekly rehearsal. For the fifth week, I gave church congregation a lecture on the biblical worship and praising for thirty minutes after the worship service and before fellowship time.

For the following four weeks (weeks 6 through 9), the choir and congregation sang a special song together with a separate choir practice. For the sixth week, the choir sang the first verse of a hymn, and a solo and choir sang the second verse in a higher descant tone. For the last verse, the choir and congregation sang together: the choir sang it in a higher descant tone, and the congregation followed its melody.

For the seventh week, I chose a hymn so that the congregation could sing it easily, an antiphon type. The choir sang the hymn first, and the congregation repeated them. This format helped the congregation feel not like an audience but like a part of the choir. For doxologies of worship, only the choir sang prayer songs, and the choir and congregation sang the first opening songs and the last benediction songs together.

For the eighth week, I chose a gospel song that has biblical words in good tone. The choir took care of the harmony of the song according to their own parts, and the congregation followed the melody.

For the ninth week, I chose a higher level classical song. For the regular hymns, the congregation followed the melodies of the hymns, and the choir added the harmonies according to their own parts, so that they experienced the multiple voices in harmony.

For the tenth week, congregation, and church staff completed a post-survey. If the new format of praises worked, there would be three more weeks of the same style of worship. For the fourteenth and the fifteenth week, the congregation, choir, and staff completed the last survey to evaluate the project.

CHAPTER 2
BIBLICAL AND THEOLOGICAL PRINCIPLES
FOR INTEGRATING CHORAL AND
CONGREGATIONAL PRAISE

The fundamental task of the church is the worship of God.¹ It is neither evangelism nor fellowship with one another, though these activities are essentially needed in the body of Christ. The first question in the Westminster Shorter Catechism seeks to identify the chief aim of humankind. The answer is given as follows: “to glorify God and enjoy him forever.”²

The order of the content of the answer above is significant. God’s will is that His creatures glorify Him. His creatures cannot enjoy Him, without first glorifying Him. Thus, glorifying God is first, is the ultimate spiritual sacrifice of the body of Christ to God. Biblical worship and praise becomes tenable because of the existence of God. Without God there will be no biblical worship and praise.

Since God is who He is and He is responsible for the existence of the universe, worship is the necessary response of His creation to Him. This is especially true for that part of His creation that is created in His image. God is the ultimate object of any form or expression of biblical worship. Ralph Martin writes,

Worship is the dramatic celebration of God in his supreme worth in such a manner that his “worthiness” becomes the norm and inspiration of human living therefore understanding worship in the way we have suggested delivers us from the tyranny

¹Franklin M. Segler, *Christian Worship: Its Theology and Practice*, 2nd ed. (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1996), 1-2.

²Clyde L. Manschreck, ed., *A History of Christianity, Readings in the History of the Church* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1964), 2:200-03.

of subjectivism . . . the chief aim of worship is God himself.³

Worship directed at any other object is idolatry and inherently false. In the worship of God, the Bible must inform theology of the church and its praxis. It must be the starting and ending point in its quest to worship God. The Old and New Testaments emphasize the importance of worship and praise to God who created the heaven and the earth.

The controversies existing in some local congregations today would not have been there if the members are well informed about the theology of worship. It is essential for the people of God to learn all they can from the origins, development, and principles of worship as these have been revealed in the Scriptures. From Genesis to Revelation, God discloses to His people, why and how of worship, because it is of great importance to the living and true God.⁴ Worship begins with and ends with God. The Bible discloses the truth with such precision and perfect adaptation to the needs and longing desire of the human heart, that there are no other holy religious writings comparable with it. This chapter investigates into the biblical and theological principles of worship and praise as revealed in both the Old and New Testaments. Several passages of the Bible emphasize the importance of worship. Some passages dealing with the demand and importance of worship will be also examined.

The Importance of Worship

Old Testament teaching about worship includes instructions about the forms of worship. As one reads the books of Exodus and Leviticus, one cannot help but realizing the level of details with which God instructed Moses for proper worship. Ultimately, God

³Ralph Martin, *The Worship of God* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982), 4-5.

⁴Robert G. Rayburn, *O Come Let Us Worship* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1980), 43.

must teach His people how to worship Him, because without instruction and training, people tend to worship in vain. The worship of God in both the Old and New Testaments is not left to Human being's instinct.

The need for such instruction grew out of the ever-present idolatry which could be found all around the Israelite community. Pagan worship was filled with detestable practices including but not limited to cult prostitution ("the high places," Deut 12:2 and elsewhere) and child sacrifice ("Molech," Lev 18:21 and elsewhere; often called "passing your children through the fire," Ezek 20:31). Blood rituals were connected to strength in battle, and God, therefore, prohibited the consumption of blood. Israel was called to worship God in a distinct and unique way, that is, in a "holy" way, honoring God apart from these pagan practices.

Words associated with "praise" are used as often in the Old Testament as the words for "worship." The verb *Barak* is found 329 times and is usually translated "to bless." It has to do with people blessing others, God blessing His people, and people blessing God.⁵ When people "bless" God in the Psalms, the NIV usually translates it "praise" as in Psalms 63:4: "I will praise [*Barak*] you as long as I live, and in your name will I lift up my hands."

The verb *Hallal* is used 146 times, most often in the Psalms, and it means "to praise, boast, [or] exult," and usually refers to praise of God, often in conjunction with music and singing.⁶ "I will praise [*Hallal*]the Lord all my life; I will sing praise to my God as long as I live" (Ps 146:2; cf. 149:1; 150). The verb *Yada* used 111 times, means "to praise, (give) thanks, [or] confess" as an acknowledgment of His person and work.⁷ The majority of references are found in the Psalms. For example, Psalm 106:1: "Praise

⁵Francis Brown, S. R. Driver, and Charles A. Briggs, *The Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon: Coded with Strong's Concordance Numbers* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1996), s.v. "Barak."

⁶Ibid., s.v. "Hallal."

⁷Ibid., s.v. "Yada."

[*Hallel*] the Lord. Give thanks [*Yada*] to the Lord, for he is good; his love endures forever” (Pss 107:1; 136:1-3, 26).

When one gets through reading the New Testament, one discovers that the theme of worship is asserted and enlarged in its meaning. A number of Greek words are used with their own nuances. Bowing before a master was well-known in Greek culture, and the Christian texts apply this to Christ and God (see Luke 22:41; Matt 17:14; Mark 10:7; Rom 4:10).

Perhaps the most familiar passage is Philippians 2:10-11, which states that “every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus is Lord [*Kurios*] to the glory of God the Father.” To kneel is to show humility, need, respect, submission, and adoration. From the whole sweep of the New Testament texts, irrespective of the vocabulary detailed above, several key components of worship emerge: prayer, praise, confession of sin, confession of faith, reading of Scripture, preaching, the Lord’s Supper, the collection, and service.⁸ The one item not included in the worship of God in the New Testament is animal sacrifices as seen in the Old Testament.

As with Old Testament, the New Testament teaches that worship is to be directed only to the Triune God. When tempted by the devil, Jesus emphatically declared the exclusivity of Christian worship, “Worship [*Proskyneo*] the Lord your God, and serve [*latreuo*] him only” (Matt 4:10). Jesus is worshipped as God. The nature of worship is perhaps best described in the words of Jesus as He addressed the Samaritan woman in John 4. Two passages from both the Old and New Testament disclose the object of biblical worship and attitude of the worshippers during worship.

⁸Geoffrey W. Bromiley, “Worship,” in vol. 6 of *Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1975), 969-90.

God, the Primary Object of Worship

Jesus, in speaking with the Samaritan woman, talked about worship in the heart, the invisible temple where the Holy Spirit dwells rather than in the visible temple. It also spoke of worship given in spirit and in truth. He pointed out that it is not the place that someone worships that is important, but primary object of worship. Also the essential thing is how the worship happens.

Jesus maintained that the true worshippers focus on the Father. It is clear from this passage that the object of biblical worship is God alone. Christ also further disclosed and declared that God is a Spirit, not a human person. God the Father is a divine personality not located in a particular place, but a Spirit who communes with the human spirit.

Thus, the true worshippers must worship God in spirit, that is, within their own souls, and in truth, that is, with sincerity.⁹ In other words, the main thought here is that the highest part of man's nature should be attuned to God, who is a spirit, and that his worship must be based upon the reality of God whom he approaches in devotion. Truth is an essential aspect of worship (John 4:23).¹⁰

God must be worshipped in accordance with His revelation of Himself, which is what God has revealed in the scriptures. Further, anyone who worships God must do so in consistence with God's character. God is holy (Lev 11:44-45). The Bible reveals God as perfect in holiness, separate from creation (Isa 6:1-3). Charles Hodge explained it:

Two fundamental principles of the religion of the Bible are first, that there is only the living and true God, the maker of heaven and earth, who has revealed Himself under the name Jehovah; secondly, that this God is a Spirit, and therefore, incapable of being conceived of or represented under a visible form. The first commandment,

⁹Samuel Ngewa, *John*, in *African Bible Commentary* (Nairobi: WordAlive, 2006), 1260.

¹⁰James M. Boice, *The Gospel of John: An Expository Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1975), 1:367-69.

therefore, forbids the worship of any other being than Jehovah; and the second, the worship of any visible object whatever.¹¹

Again, the sense of the divine reality arises from God's own initiative. He is one who seeks such worshippers, and bestows the spirit of truth.¹²

God desires worshippers to offer themselves first to Him in worship. It is incredible to consider that the God of the universe, the creator of all, seeks to have a relationship with His creatures. This relationship is to be grounded in His people's worship of Him. According to Don McMinn, "God is not seeking worship, He is seeking worshippers."¹³ True worship begins with an understanding of who God is, as a pivotal point to a regenerated spirit.

Though men may seek religious expression, no one seeks after God (Rom 3:10f). The words of Jesus to the Samaritan woman indicate that it is the Father who actively seeks true worshipers (John 4:23). An examination of the first verses of this account, lend an understanding that Jesus intended to pass through Samaria (4:4). He was seeking this woman and her fellow countrymen to be His worshipers. God has initiated our worship of Himself in several ways.

First, He has revealed Himself to us in human flesh, in the person of Jesus Christ. When men recognized Him as God's Messiah, they worshiped Him (e.g. John 9:35-38). Secondly, He has accomplished redemption through the work of Jesus Christ. The sin which alienated us from God has been paid for by the death of Christ. Finally, He has given us the written word which instructs us in true worship. From Romans 11:36, all things are "of Him and through Him and unto Him." Since God is the One who initiated worship, so He continues to enable the believers to worship through the agency of the

¹¹Charles Hodge, *Systematic Theology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1946), 3:290.

¹²Arthur J. Gossip, *The Gospel According to St. John*, in vol. 8 of *The Interpreter's Bible Commentary* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1952), 528.

¹³Don McMinn, *A Heart Aflame* (Irving, TX: NCM, 1993), 5.

Holy Spirit (Rom 8:26; Phil 3:3).

Attitude of Worshippers

Even after the entrance of sin, worship continued, but on somewhat different patterns. The worshippers used altars and sacrificed animal victims in the worship of God. The experience of Cain, whose offering was not acceptable to God, is an early lesson in the fact that worship has theological significance. The Bible does not explain why God had no respect for Cain and his offering. Gordon J. Wenham summarized five different scholarly views as follows:

At least five different types of explanation have been offered. (1) God prefers shepherds to gardeners (Gunkel). This seems improbable in the light of 2:15 where Adam was appointed to till the soil. (2) Animal sacrifice is more acceptable than vegetable offerings (Skinner, Jacob). While blood sacrifices were obviously regarded as more valuable, every stratum of the law recognizes the propriety and necessity of grain offerings as well. (3) God's motives are inscrutable: his preference for Abel's sacrifice reflects the mystery of divine election (von Rad, Vawter, Golka, and apparently Westermann). Clearly the preference for Abel does anticipate a frequent pattern in Genesis of the choice of the younger brother (cf. Jacob/Esau, Isaac/Ishmael, etc.), but this type of explanation should only be resorted to if the text gives no other motives for divine action. (4) Inspired by Heb. 11:4, "By faith Abel offered to God a more acceptable sacrifice than Cain," some commentators (e.g., Calvin, Dillmann, Driver, König) suggest that it was the differing motives of the two brothers, known only to God, that accounts for their different treatment. (5) The commonest view among commentators, ancient and modern, is that it was the different approach to worship that counted and that this was reflected in the quality of their gifts. Whereas Cain offered simply "some produce of the land," Abel offered the choicest animals from his flock, "firstlings" and "their fat portions." The sacrificial law underlines frequently that only perfect, unblemished animals may be offered in sacrifice (Lev 1:3; 22:20–22, etc.).¹⁴

One of possible reasons was there given; the offering of an animal victim as against fruit of the ground (v. 3). Cain deliberately chose to bring what pleased him, not what pleased God. Cain failed to demonstrate obedience and faith.

Worship in any form, is more than a mere spontaneous gesture, done by mankind in its own way. Worship has to be in harmony with a body of revelation which

¹⁴Gordon J. Wenham, *Genesis 1-15*, World Biblical Commentary, vol. 1 (Waco, TX: Word, 1987), 104.

God has disclosed to humanity.¹⁵ Cain and Abel were expected to demonstrate an attitude of humility and obedience, showing their reverence for God, and their faith and dependence upon Him, by slaying the firstborn of the flock and solemnly presenting them with the blood as a burnt offering to God.

The Lord's respect to Abel's offering was not merely recognition of Abel's state of mind, though that is implied in the reference to the person, as distinct from the offering, but it was approval of Abel's obedience to the religious prescription which is in the background.¹⁶ Both children might have learnt the prescribed worship system from their father, Adam. Abel's offering confirms to the prescribed object of sacrifice in Leviticus 3:16.

The Bible prescribes how the people of God should please God in their choral and congregational praise. When people contravene to those biblical and theological principles, God is dishonored, with their worship event. Every expression of worship should be reverent. Reverence is to honor and esteem someone properly. Activities of worship should never be allowed to degenerate into irreverence. Rayburn asserted,

We do know that God had revealed to Adam the promise of the coming Redeemer and His triumph over Satan, although even this great announcement was veiled in symbolic language (Gen. 3:15). It was through the medium of sacrifice that God chose to provide for man not only a visible means of worship but also a means of comprehending at least in part those deep theological truths concerning the awful gulf which separates man in his sin from a holy God We must not forget that in the wisdom of God it was given a dominant place in the worship of the Old Testament because of the central fact of salvation history to which every sacrifice pointed, God's offering of His own Son as a sufficient sacrifice for the sins of man.¹⁷

Certainly, the animal victim, as one of the elements of worship, was God ordained (Gen 3:21). God obviously wanted man to maintain the same blood

¹⁵Norval F. Pease, *And Worship Him* (Nashville: Southern Publishing Association, 1967), 12.

¹⁶Thomas Whitelaw, *Genesis*, in vol. 1 of *The Pulpit Commentary*, ed. H. D. M. Spence and Joseph S. Exell (New York: Funk & Wagnalls, 1950), 78.

¹⁷Rayburn, *O Come Let Us Worship*, 45-46.

sacrifices for sin, as a perpetual practice until Jesus Christ, the perfect and eternal lamb for sins, comes. The animal victim bears their sin, and it displays a confession of their faith in the promised Redeemer (Gen 3:15).

One cannot demonstrate the attitude of reverence in worship without humility. One significant attitude lacking in Cain (Gen 4:5-6) was humility. God gave him opportunity to improve in his offering of worship, but he failed. Whenever someone approaches God, he must do so, not only with an understanding of God's greatness, but also with an understanding of his own unworthiness.

The attitude of pride will disqualify and invalidate one's worship, rendering it unacceptable to God. Both the Hebrew and Greek words from which the word worship is derived from, necessitates humility, which in a sense demonstrates prostrating oneself before God. The proud in heart cannot worship God because they will find it difficult to bow to Him. Abraham's chief servant, in thanking God for leading him successfully in finding a wife for Isaac, displayed humility as he bowed himself down to the ground before the Lord (Gen 24:52).

Furthermore, another attitude that worshippers must exhibit as they come into the presence of God, is submission. Beginning to comprehend the greatness of God will lead one to personal humility, as he identifies his own unworthiness compared to God's eternal excellence; he then must reverentially trust who God is, and accept that He is worthy of all honor, glory, and praise; finally, he must, from the heart, submit himself completely to God, the gracious Creator. Without question, service is the culmination of worship. Worship that includes feelings, words, and voices, but does not extend to service, is no worship at all. True worship requires that one live under a constant sense of the presence of God.¹⁸

¹⁸James Mudge, *Religious Experience* (New York: The Methodist Book Concern, 1913), 16.

The Importance of Praise

Many biblical passages mention how the people of God praised or should praise God. The act of praise involves different activities, namely, the use of voices, shouting, singing, thanksgiving, joyful noise, crying out, laughter, musical instruments, bowing and kneeling before God, clapping of hands, uplifting of hands, and dancing. Most importantly, the Book of Psalms and some other passages in the Bible mention reasons why God should be praised. The following Bible passages deal with why people should render praises to God.

The Purpose of Creation of the Universe

Psalm 148:1-14 begins and ends with the words “Praise the Lord.” It is a call to everything in heaven and earth to join in praising the great, wise and loving God who made them and who is responsible for their continuing existence. “This rhapsodic hymn of praise is the third of the five hallelujah psalms with which the Psalter is brought to its close.”¹⁹ William R. Taylor and W. Stewart McCullough argued,

The poet believes that all nature ought to sing to the Lord, and that the worshippers gathered in the temple become for the heavens, the earth, and underworlds, the things that have no power of song, the voice of praise—all nature sings through them.²⁰

They also analyzed the structure of Psalm 148 as follows:

The psalm falls into two parts which are subdivided severally into two or three strophes. The first part (vv. 1-6) is a fivefold summons to the heavenly creation, made up of the heavenly beings (vv. 1-2) and heavenly phenomena (vv. 3-4), to praise the Lord. A refrain (vv. 5-6) is sung by the temple choir or choirs as a response to the summons of vv. 1-4. The second part (vv. 7-14a) consists of an appeal to the earthly creation, made up of the deep and the things that arise from it (vv. 7-8), the earth and the things on it (vv. 9-10), and the peoples of the earth, high and low, young and old (vv. 11-12), to praise the Lord. A second refrain (vv. 13-14a) follows as a response to the second appeal. The parts may each have been sung by a

¹⁹William R. Taylor and W. Stewart McCullough, *Psalms*, in vol. 4 of *The Interpreter's Bible Commentary* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1983), 754.

²⁰Ibid.

different body of singers, the refrains by all in chorus.²¹

The word “praise” appears 13 times in the 14 verses of this Psalm. For the praise to God, the psalmist summoned the various parts of nature names in the same order as that of the creation in Genesis 1. “His cosmology also follows the ancient Oriental conception of the world as a three-storied structure (Ps 8; Deut 33:13), with the heavens in the top story, the earth in the lower, and the underworld in the lowest.”²²

According to Taylor and McCullough, “The theology of the writer is clear; that these things owe their existence to the very One who made them, that is, the Lord. Further, the goodness of the Creator could be seen and traced in all things.”²³ Again, the psalmist calling upon the whole earth to praise God, would remind men and women, young and old, great and small, the celebrated and the anonymous, the rulers and the ruled, that they are great debtors to the world in which they live. Evidently, all life is set forth as a means of glorifying God. Governments exist to further His justice, and families to fulfill His joy. Furthermore, these created things and beings continue to exist because God made a decree that they should endure as long as He wills. This psalm would have been a polemic against idolatry.

Moreover, in Isaiah 43:20-21, more important, God’s chosen people would praise Him. God created Israel for His own praise, as human witnesses to His greatness. This continues to be the function of God’s people (Luke 1:74-75; Eph 1:4-6; 1 Pet 2:9).

The Purpose of Salvation

The Apostle Paul stated that God is to be blessed or praised for who He is and all He has done. The word for praise is *eulogētos*, from a verb that means “to speak well of.” In the New Testament it is applied only to God (Mark 14:61; Luke 1:68; Rom 1:25,

²¹Taylor and McCullough, *Psalms*, 754.

²²Ibid.

²³Ibid.

9:5; 2 Cor 1:3; 11:31; 1 Pet 1:3).²⁴ Praise should be given to God the Father and His Son, Jesus Christ. In Ephesians 1:2, God is the Father of believers; here in verse 3 God is the Father of Christ (v. 17; cf. similar wording in Rom 15:6; 2 Cor 1:3; 1 Pet 1:3). The first Person of the Trinity identifies Himself with believers, suggested by the word “our.” Here in verse 3 the pronoun “our” shows that believers belong to Christ, the second Person of the Godhead. Since He is the Son of God and believers are connected with Him, they are also related to the Father.²⁵

Speaking of Him as the “Father of our Lord Jesus Christ” (v. 3) establishes the unique relationship between God the Father and Jesus the Son. This relationship, however, should not be misunderstood to mean biological one. Rather, it is a theological concept that recognizes Jesus Christ and God are both equal and eternal.²⁶

The Apostle in Ephesians 1:3 elucidates God’s blessings on believers: (1) when: eternity past; (2) with what: every spiritual blessing; (3) where: in the heavenly realms; (4) how: in Christ. Paul continued his discussion of believers’ spiritual blessings by showing that they are based on the work of the three Persons of the Trinity: the selection of the Father (vv. 4-6), the sacrifice of the Son (vv. 7-12), and the seal of the Spirit (vv. 13-14).²⁷

The ultimate goal of God’s election understood from Ephesians 1:6 is that those elected by grace, that is, the believers in Christ Jesus would undertake the praise of God. Ephesians 1:6 says, “To the praise of the glory of his grace”—this is a Hebraism,

²⁴John F. Walvoord and Roy B. Zuck, eds., *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Wheaton, IL: Victor, 1985), 2:616.

²⁵Theodore O. Wedel, *Ephesians*, in vol. 10 of *The Interpreter’s Bible Commentary* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1983), 612.

²⁶William Hendrikson, *Exposition of Ephesians*, New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1995), 72-73.

²⁷Wedel, *Ephesians*, 613-26.

and means the same as “to his glorious grace.” The object was to excite thanksgiving for his glorious grace manifested in the divine election.

It reminds the believers that the proper attitude toward the grace of election is not to oppose God but to persevere in gratefulness to Him. In accordance with this point, Paul introduced the statement of Ephesians 1:3 by saying that God was to be regarded as “blessed” for forming and executing this plan. The meaning is that the doctrine of predestination and election lays the foundation of gratitude and praise. This perspective becomes more evident with a few other considerations. Since salvation is all of God’s grace, Christians certainly must praise God. That is why they were chosen, to give Him praise (“Praise be to . . . God,” v. 3).

It is the vocation to which the believers in Christ have been predestined. Christian life should be motivated by praise and thanksgiving. It is the one form of thanks-giving to return for a gift which they received for free. Christians would have a more vivid sense of thanksgiving toward God if they did not take His grace for granted.

Praise and Presence of God

In Psalm 22, even though God seemed far away, the sufferer still prayed. This psalm is considered as one of the messianic passages in the Old Testament.²⁸ Jesus Christ, while on the cross, prayed this psalm. The sufferer still remembered that “you are enthroned as the Holy One; you are the praise of Israel (22:3) or as the NRSV renders it, “you are holy, enthroned on the praises of Israel.” This translation shows that by God’s people’s praise, they exalt the Lord as King on the throne of the universe. The sufferer reminded himself of how other believers before him had called on God, and God had not failed them (22:4-5).

To some extent, there is causative relationship between praising and the

²⁸Roger Ellsworth, *Opening Up Psalms* (Leominster, UK: Day One, 2006), 193-94.

presence of God. In this psalm, God had repeatedly demonstrated His presence to His people (vv. 2-5). Furthermore, in Acts 16, the presence of God is seen when Paul and Silas praised and prayed to God while in the prison.

God manifested His presence through the earthquake which shook off the chains and opened the prison doors. As a result of this action of God, the Philippian Jailor and his entire household believed in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. Furthermore, God inhabits in the praise of His people (22:3). The theology of the New Testament offers the atonement through the sacrifice of Christ and in worship we gain that very presence of God through the sacrament of the Lord's Supper.

This principle must be carried into the theology of worship. The point is that the practice of worship must be at the spiritual level where God is primary and everything else falls in its proper place. The presence of God in a corporate worship attracts the worshippers to focus only on God. If the people's heart is filled with praise it is also filled with God, for He inhabits in their praises. This is also true of homes and churches. Fill these places with praises, and they are filled with God's presence. Believers can surround themselves with God's presence by cultivating the attitude of praise. They will then be more conscious of His presence than of problems, difficulties and adverse circumstances. Many blessings result from praising God. Furthermore, the presence of God adds strength. God often grants His children victory over their enemies through praises (2 Chr 20). Believers in God also know the joy of the Lord through praise, and the joy of the Lord is their strength (Neh 8:10; Ps 84:4, 5).

In praising God, the focus should not be on selves, human needs, whatever the people can gain from such spiritual exercise. Praise and worship are not about the members of the congregation but about God. It is not emotionalism; but in the praise and worship of God either in songs or any other events in the local church, it must involve all that God has endowed on His people with—psychological, intellectual, spiritual, and physical. It should also involve their money and time.

The Choir System in the Old Testament

Among the temple personnel, the Levites were assigned as singers, which one might consider as the choir or choral group of the temple in those days (1 Chr 9:17-33). Although the Levite singers became formally organized as a choral group as dated back to David and Samuel (1 Chr 9:22); God set the Levites aside to minister (Num 3:5-8). They form a distinct group at the heart of Korah's clan.

Recently, some people suggest that the idea of choir is outdated. However, if one considers the history and purpose of the choir, one finds that this position is unfounded and baseless. The idea of the choir has its origin in the Old Testament.

Choirs became prominent at the time of David and Solomon in Israel. The singing was left in large measure to the Levites.²⁹ No biblical data shows that choirs were used directly in worship in the Temple. The Bible does not provide explicit evidence that choirs were used in Christian worship in the New Testament though singing was a part of the worship expression of the congregation.

King David appointed and established the first choir. It is clear from this passage and many other passages in the Old Testament that the Levites were a very important part of worship. The Levites fulfilled a mediatory role in the Old Testament system of worship. They had no other duties because their job was full time ministry in songs and music at the presence of the Lord.

Levites engaged in their work all day. They led the congregation of Israel in their worship and praise of Jehovah, apart from the priests. The decision of what song to sing came from them and not the congregation. Unlike today, the Levites were compensated for their ministering in music and songs in the house of the Lord. They were not volunteers; and the choir was a male dominated activity. The Levites were the only

²⁹John A. Thompson, *1, 2 Chronicles*, New American Commentary, vol. 9 (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2001), 137.

ones to form the Temple choir. One of the priestly duties was to perform and to lead the music.

Choirs are mentioned only in the Old Testament in the history of the Bible. The New Testament portrays a different picture. It seems after the destruction of the Temple in AD 70 by the Romans, there were no choirs in the synagogues because these were places of instruction rather than worship. In contrast to the minority priesthood in the Old Testament, all believers are priests through the blood of Christ (1 Pet 2:5) in the New Testament. As a direct result of Christ's atoning death on the cross, a powerful and definite swing from divided, segregated worship as in the Levitical system, to united and corporate worship through the blood of Christ, has taken place. As such, believers in Jesus Christ are encouraged to worship God in a united and corporate way.

The Power of Integrated Praise in the New Testament

Most Christians welcome the idea of a choir singing in their local church services. The singing of a choir has been a fixture that has stood the test of time both in the Old and New Testaments. This is understandable as choirs played prominent role in the Bible's own description of divine worship. Choirs comprised both of men and women singers (Neh 7:67; 2 Chr 35:25). They were organized for the worship of the temple and were placed under the direction of capable musicians (1 Chr 25).

Choral singing was accompanied by instruments, indeed in the temple by a full orchestra, as is also indicated in the titles of various psalms eg., Ps 6. Nevertheless, the featuring of choir did not replace the people's participation in the worship and praise of God. There was integration of choral and congregational praise (Exod 15; 2 Chr 20).

Choirs are found before, during, and after the temple in the Old Testament. They are part of the temple worship. The New Testament shows what seem to be choirs singing in heaven. It does not preclude the use of choirs in worship. Nonetheless, it tells comparatively little about how to construct a worship service. This might be because

instruction had been so comprehensively given in the Old Testament. The Bible favors choral singing as a part of worship (1 Chr 24-25).

There are churches in which choirs do displace the congregation's own singing. However, as the Bible itself demonstrates, in a properly ordered worship, both choir and congregation have their proper places. The value of a choir, from biblical times to the present day, has been its ability, more than the congregation's, to glorify God with the beauty of music. Choirs are meant to animate worship, not distract from it, nor supplant the congregational participation. Choirs are, in the Bible and in all serious Christian liturgical theology, the voice of the people.³⁰

Revelation chapters 4 and 5, provide strong support for integrating choral and congregational praise in a local church. What is witnessed in the text is a divine pattern of worship which the church is to follow in its earthly worship celebrations. In Revelation the twenty-four elders and living creatures lead the congregation in praise and worship of the Lamb.

From these two chapters the believers are reminded that the "center of worship" is "the One" who sits on the throne at the center of all things (4:2ff). Notice the orientation of what takes place in relationship to the throne: throne in heaven (4:2), One sitting on the throne (4:2), encircling the throne (4:3; 5:11), surrounding the throne (4:4), from the throne (4:5), before the throne (4:6a; 4:10b), in the center around the throne (4:6b), Him who sits on the throne (4:9), before him who sits on the throne (4:10a), the right hand of him who sat on the throne (5:1; 5:7), a Lamb slain, yet standing in the center of the throne, encircled (5:6).

Clearly the throne represents the rule of God as the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Its location, in the center of all things, points to the focus of all worship.

³⁰Robert S. Rayburn, "Biblical Worship" [on-line]; accessed 13 August 2011; available from <http://www.faithtacoma.org/content/nl-worship-09.aspx>; Internet.

Surrounding the throne, engaged in various acts of worship (speaking, singing, falling down, casting down crowns) are all the representatives of the Creation, including human beings “from every tribe, language, people and nation” (5:9) and an innumerable company of angels (5:11). The vision is comprehensive, and extends the actions of worship to “every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and on the sea and all that is in them” (5:13).

Summary

In summary, worship is the exaltation of the Creator in the heart and mind of His creation. Proper worship is motivated by an understanding of who God is and what He has done, what is He is doing, and what He is going to do. It is God whose Person and acts are both the theme and the formative principle of true worship and praise.

Realized and overcome by the majestic greatness of God, the worshipper will be able to approach Him in the proper attitude. To approach Him without having the proper attitude will result in one’s worship not being accepted, because it is nothing more than mere outward formalism. If one is to worship God acceptably, according to the truth of Scripture, then he must approach God with humility, reverential faith, and the heart of submission. Whether the Scripture is speaking of the worshipful actions of singing, praising, lifting of hands, clapping hands, or silence (which is so often neglected), these elements are always present.

Jesus declared in John 4:24, “God is spirit, and his worshippers must worship in spirit and in truth.” If worship is to be acceptable, then it must be rooted and grounded in the truth of God’s Word. It must be proper and consistent in its view of the majestic greatness of God and the moral depravity of man. It must see God as being “high and lifted up,” and must question, “what is man that you are mindful of him”? (Ps 8:4).

Not only must worship be expressed according to the truth of God’s word, but it must be practiced according to the direction and leading of God’s Spirit. He is the One

who applies the truth of God's Word to the heart of man to bring about the necessary humility. He is the One who engenders reverential faith for God within the worshipper's heart. He is the One who guides the worshipper to total devotion. Even the most casual reading of Revelation reveals worship as a central motif.

Clearly, John is concerned that the churches who receive his writing worship correctly starting with the object and subject of biblical worship. In all of the Scripture (with the possible exception of Hebrews) the Triune God is clearly presented as the subject, the object, and the agent of all true biblical worship.

God the Father receives the worship of the seraphim and the gathered angelic host as well as that of the twenty-four elders gathered in His presence. At the center of this worship offered to the Father is the work accomplished by His Son, Jesus Christ. All worship is seen as empowered and made possible by the third member of the Godhead—the Holy Spirit.

In Ephesians 1:3-14, Paul's declaration is that because God has really given us all spiritual blessing, He is worthy of genuine worship. Paul calls the believers who have experienced this unbelievable and gracious work from God to respond in worship—to glorify and exalt God as "Blessed." He then goes on to articulate three primary blessings along with their accompanying benefits and purposes for which believers should respond in cheerful and thankful worship.

First, believers should worship God in joyful praise because God the Father has chosen them (1:4-6). Second, they should worship God in praise because God the Son has redeemed them (1:7-12). Finally, they should worship God in praise because God the Spirit has sealed them (1:13-14).

Furthermore, both some passages in the Old Testament and the Book of Revelation supports the integration of choral and congregational praise in the local church. Both in the Old and the New Testaments, meaningful corporate worship is

activity in which the people of God are active participants. Congregational praise should not be seen as something that is less than desirable.

Congregational praise has existed in the early church; though not so elaborate as seen in the Old Testament temple worship. The temple worship in the Old Testament comprised of ordained choir, who would sing in the services. It was inconceivable to the Jews that the congregation would sing in the services. Ordained psalters were entrusted with the singing of the services. Immediately after the destruction of the temple, however, ordained choir singers ceased.

Contemporary churches usually maintain non-ordained group of singers who sing in the services; and lead the congregation in congregational praises. The singers are set aside, unlike the temple choir in the Old Testament, to help the congregation in its physical, mental, and spiritual participation in worship praise to God. It was from the synagogue that the Christian communities took over the tradition of reciting, chanting, and singing, as more fitting for their simple service than the elaborate music of the Temple, with its large-sized choirs and instrumental music.

It is normal for the church to set apart individuals as singers and recognize them as such. There are also instances of the choir singing alone on certain occasions. Choral singing should not displace congregational praise. It is a blessing to have a continuous tradition of congregational praise. It is also paramount to maintain excellent choral.

The leaders of the church must not allow the choral praise take over congregational participation. The worship and praise events must be corporately carried on by all the members of the church, not just a few select ones or so-called professional singers. Worship and praise is the responsibility of a redeemed community in response to both God's redemptive activity on their behalf as well as His revelation for their lives.

CHAPTER 3
THEOLOGICAL AND SOCIOLOGICAL ISSUES
FOR INTEGRATING CHORAL AND
CONGREGATIONAL PRAISE

Today the church is faced with the issue of fulfilling the Great Commission (Matt 28:18-20) in a world so polarized in thoughts and practices. Evangelization of the people of the world is the church's secondary attention, after its primary and pivotal function of worship to God who instituted and commissioned it into the world. The issue is how the church can efficiently evangelize the people of this postmodern culture, and bring them to the church and have them experience the presence of God, without compromising its message.

The landscape of contemporary culture—postmodernism is ever-changing.¹ It has gradually influenced the highest ranks of Christian leadership, church growth principles, worship styles, hermeneutical techniques and preaching. It is important for the church, to understand the cultures in which she exists, in order to do that well. This present culture has put much pressure on the church. Hence, the church does not understand the postmodern society in which she ministers to. The church does not have a biblical worldview in place to promote and defend its praxis in this changing culture. Also, it is obvious that the church is undergoing some form of transformation in its worship styles. This entails a number of struggles or epistemological crises that can be confusing and painful. The fact is that the church has the capacity to resist secularization and to respond with a powerful discourse, both critical and constructive, to the challenges that contemporary culture poses.

¹In this project, two terms apply interchangeably: contemporary culture and postmodernism.

Characteristics of Contemporary Culture

There are certain factors, which display the crisis of the contemporary culture. These factors are indications of the extremism in the thoughts and practices of men in society, where God is either denied of His right of worship or an allegiance to Him is challenged. The breakdowns are be evidenced by some definite phenomena within individual and social life of man. The scope of this project limits an in-depth discussion of these phenomena.

The first aspect of such trends is secularization. It is a characteristic in which all the aspects of life have changed from God-centered to man-centered. Secularization is a universal phenomenon. Traditional values are now criticized and classical authorities are challenged. It is clear that the culture of materialism and man-centered secularization is indeed an obstacle to the acceptance and dissemination of the church's message. It is a historic-cultural development under which there is concentration of attention on temporary life, and on terrestrial reality. It implies a process of culture emancipating itself from moments of the orthodox Christian faith. Its main feature is the flight from fundamental questions. In the field of human activity, it appears as a trait justifying man's motivations without any reference beyond the realm of temporary purposes.

The second trend of the contemporary culture is a dechristianization. It is a process of dehabitation from everything that is Christian. It manifests itself in disappearance of religious practices. It is linked closely with a process of eliminating sacred elements from beliefs and individual attitudes, organizational structures and even from religious functions.² The trends above reveal themselves in practical moves of man, morality, religion, science, art and politics. If it is said, metaphorically, that the contemporary culture is ill then it should be also said that, in some sense, ill is the

²Adam Rodzinski, *Person, Morality and Culture* (Lublin, Poland: Catholic University of Lublin, 1989), 229.

contemporary man.

The third characteristic is individualism. “Nobody has a right to invade one’s privacy.” This is the core of postmodernism. Everyone has a right to decide for himself or herself. Modern people are comfortable with many options and alternatives as choices through the process of individualism. The impact of individualism on religion is, “I will choose whatever religion I want to,” or “Nobody can tell me what religion I should choose.” As a result, the impact of the church as a community has been weakened.³

The fourth characteristic is pluralism. Pluralism is a worldview that allows various systems to be true at the same time. For that to be possible there has to be pessimism about the possibility of discovering absolute truth. So many positions can be ‘true’ in part--religious, political or other ideologies. A personal set of beliefs is a preference. And a person may include more than one system at a time. In short, it is only a matter of taste or preference no matter what kind of religion, moral principles, or artistic trend one may choose. Therefore, with pluralism, Christ is no more definitive or normative than any religious figure or concept. Or, as J. Andrew Kirk explained, “[r]ather than confessing that Jesus Christ is the one Lord over all, this view asserts that the one Lord who has manifested himself in other names is also known as Jesus.”⁴ By “crossing the Rubicon,” as John Hick and Paul Knitter illustrated, “Christians are encouraged to abandon any claim of Christian uniqueness and the possibility of absolute revelation, accepting the fact that the Christian faith is one among many options.”⁵ Consequently, the transcendental aspect in Christianity is challenged, eternal and consistent truth is

³Un Bae Kim, “Contemporary Popular Culture and Christian Responsibility: A Koran Adventist Perspective,” a paper presented at the 28th International Faith and Learning Seminar 2 (Babcock University, Nigeria, June 17-29, 2001), 178.

⁴J. Andrew Kirk, *Loosing the Chains: Religion as Opium and Liberation* (London: Hodder & Stroughton, 1992), 11.

⁵John Hick and Paul Knitter, *The Myth of Christian Uniqueness: Toward a Pluralistic Theology of Religions* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1987), vii-xii.

abandoned, and the unique identity of Christianity is threatened.

Influence of Contemporary Culture to Church Worship

Whether viewed from the Western or third world perspective, the church is on the heels of postmodernism. The contemporary culture in the twenty-first century is the primary challenge of the church, in all its breadth and depth. The church must deal with individualism and pluralism and as well as with the rapid changes in moral values. It must find a way to promote ideal lifestyles for this age.

Church faces competition from a variety of cultural effects. It is confronted by new problems requiring innovative wisdom. The possibility of handing down its traditional values intact to the next generation is being questioned. Worship styles, musical preferences, and recreational activities have changed. Members are exposed to similar magazines, television, videos and even movies to what the rest of the community is exposed. There is no question that the members have changed. There is no way to avoid the challenge of today's popular culture. This is the environment that surrounds the church. The influence of culture in this modern time is inescapable.

Many local churches across the spectrum have jumped on this bandwagon and caught the vision while others either struggle to breakthrough to this new worldview or resist it completely as a fad. Postmodernism worldview has continued to influence the church both negatively and positively. With the rise of postmodernism came ideas such as political correctness, tolerance, moral relativism, new age spirituality, religious syncretism, empowerment of minorities, homosexual and gay rights. Every area of society has been touched by postmodernism—education, health care, literature, law, science, and religion are all mutating under the influence of postmodernism.⁶

⁶Postmodernism's influence in these areas is well treated in Dennis McCallum, *The Death of Truth* (Minneapolis: Bethany, 1996), 1-288.

The questions being addressed are: what does all this mean for today's church? What impact does postmodernism have on the way the believers "do church"? What is worship supposed to look like in a postmodern society? Besides these questions, the most important questions one should ask in this contemporary season would be: What is truth and how can one experience God in a communal setting? Regardless of the type of worship service a church will have, its main purpose is to answer this vital question and show people that Jesus is the absolute truth and no other. This must be the ultimate goal, but not everyone accepts it that simple. As a result of Christian's church claim to an exclusive metanarratives (worldview), conservative, the Bible—believing Christians are alone in being exempt from the society's tolerance. Christians are not only ignored by the contemporary or popular culture, they are increasingly singled out for ridicule and outright bashing by the so-called kinder, gentler postmodernists. The postmodernist's tolerance masks the reality of an underhanded power play. However, the Christian church has not escaped the influence of postmodernism. The two major influences of postmodernism seen in church worship are: the self-centered lifestyle, uncertainty and irrelevance of biblical doctrine.

First, there is a search for community. Beginning with the positive impact, the Church is by definition and potentiality a "real" community, despite the fact that it has sometimes lost its identity as a radical counterculture.⁷ The desire for community may be reviving an interest in ecclesiology,⁸ and the accessibility of various traditions has provided the opportunity to share them.⁹

On the negative side, communities seem even more fractured than ever.

⁷Robert Webber, *Ancient-Future Faith: Rethinking Evangelicalism for a Postmodern World* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1999), 165.

⁸Ibid., 74-77.

⁹Robert Phillips, "Changes in Technology," *Southwestern Journal of Theology* 42 (2000): 64.

Edward Farley pointed out the problem: “Those who belong to church congregations are the same ones who fill the shopping malls and rock concerts and imbibe the multiple worlds of television.”¹⁰ The church is becoming more and more a self-centered lifestyle. Many church members consciously or unconsciously have allowed postmodern thought to influence them. This attitude in turn influences the way worship is conducted in most Christian churches, today. This concerns those who have at one time or another been fed with the New Age writings. To them, absolute truth no longer exists. There is no absolute authority; since they consider themselves as god. People no longer believe in something because it is true but because they like it. Self is now the center of consciousness. People now make choices based on what brings the most personal satisfaction. They want to know what is in it for them. They pick a church that has what they want, not the one that is necessarily biblical. This attitude influences the worship element of the local church. Many people attend a local church not to worship God but to worship self. Songs or music in the church are chosen to make people feel good. Charles Colson catalogued some of the attitudes that are prevailing in the postmodern church.¹¹ People now approach the church as consumers, just like everything else in life. Religious content is losing relevance as people more and more desire to have their “felt needs” met. People now want a religion that “works” or that they can use to make them happy.

The second but dangerous of influence of the postmodernism on the church is the uncertainty and irrelevance of biblical doctrine. The first influence discussed above is related to the second. The self-centered lifestyle is dangerous to the church because of its effect on theology. There appears to be compromise and rage against some fundamental doctrines of the church.

¹⁰Edward Farley, *Deep Symbols: Their Postmodern Effacement and Reclamation* (Valley Forge, PA: Trinity, 1996), 27.

¹¹Charles Colson, “Welcome to McChurch,” *Christianity Today* 36 (1992): 28-32.

Since postmodernism mentality tends to adulterate the biblical doctrine, the church must re-emphasize the essential Christian doctrines beginning with the theology proper, the doctrine of God. The doctrine of God is the foundation of all doctrines. Christianity today is so man-centered that God is almost forgotten. The spirit of postmodernism continues to impact the teachings of the church. In most pulpits today, certain doctrines are not preached nor taught. From the doctrine of God, the church must also re-emphasize the other great doctrines of the faith, especially the doctrines of hell and the exclusivity of the gospel. The tolerant postmoderns will find these doctrines intolerable. These doctrines and many others are being doubted and disbelieved, not just outside the church but even within the church. In some churches, Jesus Christ is no longer considered as the only Savior but one of the many. This gospel itself is undermined today by the ecumenical mentality

The third influence of the contemporary culture to worship has to do with relativistic mind-set. What positive impact has relativism had on worship? As one of the positive impacts of relativism, the recognition that language has the power to shape people as a community, could be construed as a positive development if people embrace the Word of God as their authority. Otherwise, the belief in the possibility of orthodoxy—as a consensus sustained over time—is no longer a basic assumption. Working backwards through the philosophical underpinnings of postmodernism, it is clear that any universal truth depends on a correspondence between words and reality. This is significant because some would say the abandonment of propositionally stated truth is a positive outcome. Douglas Groothuis argued that this confuses “the *effect* of God’s revelation with its *nature* when they claim that revelation comes through the community of faith and the experience of Christians.”¹² Groothuis further pointed that the

¹²Douglas Groothuis, *Truth Decay: Defending Christianity against the Challenges of Postmodernism* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2000), 114.

nature of truth is described as exclusive, specific and antithetic. What is true excludes all that opposes it.¹³ The need for a God-inspired word does not reduce the amount of mystery—what is unknown— except perhaps for the person who “thinks he knows something” (1Cor. 8:2). The word hides as much as it reveals. Dawn writes, “What we should avoid is letting our language turn from the truths of God revealed in God’s Word to our human adaptations that reduce those truths.”¹⁴ If the church abandons the belief that God reveals truth through human language, then the only thing left is the tradition which belongs to the community.

As stated previously, the contemporary culture has indeed impacted negatively and positively the way church conducts worship today. Worship is planned and led by a team. Various kinds of expertise are represented, including such areas as music, arts, theology, philosophy, literature, poetry, graphic design, and audio-visual technology. Ordained persons may or may not be in the team. Worship is not over-defined or prescribed. Making space for spontaneity is important, and this is the Spirit’s domain. Multiple interpretations are expected and sought. Meanings are found not anticipated by the planners. The worship space and time are usually not traditional. Part of the worship experience includes creating a sacred time and space that fits into the natural rhythm of a community’s life, sometimes in an intentionally profane setting. Worship grows out of and creates community; there is a reciprocal relationship between these two realities. Worship often includes an opportunity to connect personally with the “spiritual” through silent and directed meditation, silence, music, the arts, etc. The arts (often generated locally), including painting, sculpture, graphics, poetry, drama, dance and movement are used extensively to provide non-discursive, non-linear expressions of thoughts and

¹³Groothuis, *Truth Decay*, 75.

¹⁴Marva J. Dawn, *Reaching out without Dumbing Down: A Theology of Worship for the Turn of-the-Century Culture* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995), 226.

feelings. God is experienced as radical transcendence and radical immanence. All three members of the Trinity are given equal importance in Christian worship.

Existing Worship Models

Today, the church faces many challenges. The cultural and generational needs impose powerful influence on the ministry of the church. Corporate worship, its model and practice is of the highest concern since it bears the central event in the life of the church. Undoubtedly, the liturgy for corporate worship, from the early time of the early church has been a work in progress. There have been many changes to the liturgy for worship over the centuries, with the influence of cultural and generational adaptations. Notwithstanding, these changes were not based on biblical or historical research, but on the trends of the day. Without a second guess, the change that perhaps affected worship more than any other development in Christian history began as a result of the Protestant Reformation. Obviously, the Reformation began with some serious questions concerning the theological nature of salvation and the role of the church as it relates to man's redemption. The Reformation examined also the theology and practice of worship. For instance, prior to the Reformation, the Roman Catholic Church had almost eliminated the preaching of God's word during corporate worship.

The Reformers (Martin Luther, John Calvin and others) placed a strong emphasis upon the preaching of the Word of God and made it the focal point in the Protestant worship. The Reformation attempted to correct what they regarded as an error by Roman Catholicism, which began a theological shift in corporate worship from a focus on the Christ event and the sacrament of the Lord's Supper to a sermon centered in worship experience. The church in the postmodern world continues to struggle with this same concern. There is the great tension between those who practice the High church liturgy and the sacramental life over against those who believe in the Low Church worship with its emphasis on preaching and freedom of expression. Then there is the

conflict over corporate worship being traditional with its love for the hymnal against those wanting contemporary worship who desires a musical style more reflective of the modern times.

The Church Growth Movement added another dimension to the conflict, with its emphasis on growth. Church growth, guided by strategies, touched on and changed the liturgies of worship to appeal to the unchurched. Cultural and generational dynamism into the next century, would affect the theology of worship. With all of these challenges, there appears to be little or no consideration for biblical understanding of worship and appreciation for the heritage in worship from the church throughout the Christian history.

Some of the issues connected with worship and the discussions on the model of worship are essential, but not the central interest of this project. No doubt, the worship wars are more cultural and generational in nature rather than theological. Since the Protestant Reformation through the modern era, the center of worship has moved to a humanistic view with an experiential focus. The attempt in this chapter is to briefly discuss the theological models for worship. These models will aid one's understanding and give one a larger framework for a proper theology of worship. The writer of this project confirms that the proper focus of worship is God; and not man. But, the question is, how should each of the existing model worship God? Christianity is a religion, which has existed in a number of different forms over the past two thousand years. Some of these forms still exist today. Webb stated,

We are living in a time when almost every major denomination has been affected by renewed interest in the history, theology, and practice of worship. Landmark books published by liturgical scholars have affected renewal in the Roman Catholic, Episcopal, Presbyterian, Lutheran, Methodist, and Congregational churches, to name a few. In the meantime, many evangelical churches have remained virtually untouched by this vast amount of research and the application of it to worship renewal in the local congregations.¹⁵

¹⁵Robert E. Webber, *Worship, Old and New* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1982), 11.

The Unitarian Model

The Unitarian model is humanistic in its approach to worship. Worship is all about what one does; going to church, singing, praising, praying, and giving to God. Concerning this model, James B. Torrance asserted that worship is what people do before God.¹⁶ In other words, worship is man-centered. It is more about the worshiper and his or her action, rather than on God and His action of grace. Sadly, this model does not express its faith in the Son of God as the mediator for man's salvation.

This model is considered to be liberal and not within the evangelical camp because of its humanistic focus. It does not have a Christological view of salvation and has a weak position for the work of the Holy Spirit. By implication, this model demonstrates, God the Father has the same relationship to every person as He had with Jesus, and the Apostle Paul. Tragically, this model teaches that at the center of worship is one's response to God and not God's. Since this model does not focus on God, it must be completely rejected, as it lacks the proper theology of worship.

The Experiential Model

This model became fully developed and widely employed during the modern epoch. The experiential model has its roots in the Protestant Reformation. The Reformation brought about reform to the church and opened the way for changes in doctrines and expression of faith by the church.

As noted earlier, the theology of worship was not left untouched as a result the Protestant Reformation. Without reviewing extensively the history of Reformation, it is worthy to note that the Reformation placed such an emphasis on personal faith that accountability to the community of faith was weakened and the theological view of corporate salvation became meaningless. With the new emphasis on sola scriptura and

¹⁶James B. Torrance, *Worship, Community and the Triune God of Grace* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1996), 20.

added to that the new philosophy of individualism, the authority of interpretation was displaced from the body of believers and placed in the hands of individuals.

This approach to faith eventually affects the theology of worship as well, by placing a strong emphasis on the individual, God will be replaced as the central focus of worship. God is no longer the focus of worship, but the individual experience becomes the center. Webber gives a great summation of the result of the Reformation upon the theology of worship. His question is one the believers must answer, if they are to going to develop a biblical theology of worship.¹⁷

The problem is that the experientialist model, by its practice has placed its faith in a book, through the sermon. It is the belief of this model that through the preaching of the Word the worshipper would come to an experience of God through repentance at an altar of prayer. The means of God's grace does not come through the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, but through a response to the preaching of the Word. The critical question must be asked: Is this the correct approach to God's presence in worship. Webber would argue against this position because it places too high of an emphasis upon the sermon and subsequently to the preacher.¹⁸

The essence of experiential model is that the work of Christ is experienced by the community of faith through preaching and then the proper response to the grace of God is faith in repentance. In this model, a person gains God's grace as the result of the person's response, in a crisis moment, to the preaching of a sermon for the purpose of his or her repentance at an altar of prayer. In this case, the center of worship is God being revealed through preaching and then the sinner responding by faith through repentance. Torrance, explaining this model, wrote, "The event of the cross, through the event of

¹⁷Webber, *Ancient-Future Faith*, 15-45.

¹⁸Ibid.

preaching gives rise to the event of faith.”¹⁹

The experiential model is bedeviled with several theological problems. However, two of such problems are noted in this project: first that the sermon and the preacher has become the center of focus in worship, and second, the means of grace is no longer centered on the Christ event. The congregation is now focused on the blessings of God’s grace rather than on God Himself. Therefore, in order to have a Christ-centered worship experience the church must identify with the incarnational or Trinitarian model.

The Incarnational Model

As one peruses the history of the early church, one discovers that corporate worship of the early church was Christ-centered. From the earliest days of the Christian church, as recorded in the Book of Acts, the liturgy was consistently Christological. The incarnational model places the Trinity as the focal point and the Christ event as the center of worship. The truth is that God the Father came to humankind through Jesus Christ, the Son of God who acts as the mediator of grace (John 1:14). The believers in Jesus Christ partake in that grace, which is the work of Christ, through faith and the power of the Holy Spirit. In this view of worship, believers bring honor and glory to God by partaking in the work of Christ, through His death, resurrection and ascension.

In incarnational model, the focus of worship is not the experience of God’s grace, but God Himself. That is, the first principle in worship is God, and then follows the right response which will open an entrance into His presence. The only way into God’s presence is through Jesus Christ (John 14:6). To have relationship with Jesus Christ, is to participate and celebrate Christ event in worship. Torrance asserted,

The good news is that God comes to us in Jesus to stand for us and bring to fulfillment his purposes of worship and communion. Jesus comes to be the priest of creation to do for us, men and women, what we failed to do, to offer to the Father the worship and the praise we failed to offer, to glorify God by a life of perfect love

¹⁹Torrance, *Worship, Community and the True Triune God of Grace*, 27.

and obedience, to be the one true servant of the Lord. In him and through him we are renewed by the Spirit in the image of God and in the worship of God in a life of shared communion.²⁰

Comparing experiential worship model to the latter, the former is that worship which centers upon anything other than God; one cannot enter into His presence and the result is that His grace and mercy will not be experienced. Worship must be incarnational, meaning God-centered as the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, with a liturgy that is sacramental. The understanding is biblical and has its roots deep into the history of the early church. If the Christian church wishes to recover what was the theology of worship of the holy Catholic Church, it must return to the incarnational model. Worship is not about who the believers are and their personal needs, but about God. Worship is not about a sermon or the preacher, but God of whom the preachers and the sermon lead the people to. Torrance maintained,

The real agent in worship in a New Testament understanding is Jesus Christ who leads us in our praises and prayers, ‘the one true Minister of the sanctuary’ (Heb. 8:1-2). He is the High Priest who, by his one offering of himself for us on the cross, now leads us into the Holy of Holies, the holy presence of the Father in Holy Communion. The Trinitarian view sees the Lord’s Supper as the supreme expression of all worship.²¹

Here is the most significant difference between the experiential model and the incarnational model. The experiential model seeks the presence of God and the means of grace through the preaching of the Word. The Trinitarian model seeks the presence of God by coming to Him through incarnational worship which celebrates the Christ event through the sacrament of the Lord’s Supper and the preaching of God’s Word.

Alternative Worship Model

Worship is becoming a new wind in the global church. True worship results in life change and church renewal, because men meet God in worship. Jack W. Hayford

²⁰Torrance, *Worship, Community and The True Triune God of Grace*, 14.

²¹*Ibid.*, 23.

affirmed, “The reformation in worship is in progress. It is already begun, and its fruit has been tested and proven worthy in sufficient number of situations to show we are not simply dealing with a fad.”²² One strategy for incarnating the Christian faith in the present postmodern era is what has become known as “alternative worship.” Alternative worship has been around for more than a decade.

There are several groups which have introduced alternative worship in both the Euro-America and Africa-Asia worlds. Alternative worship “arises from the need for the church to engage with a culture shift, from the patterns of Christian life which took shape in modernity, to a faith which brings the authentic message of Christ to bear on life in postmodernity.”²³ Alternative worship is much more than a cosmetic change to the style of church. It really has a different plausibility structure with its own authenticity. One way in which alternative worship is deemed to be authentic is if it resonates with the curators of the worship and with the culture outside the church. The use of popular culture in the worship is one of the ways in which this resonance is established.²⁴

Contemporary Music and Church Praise

In most local denominations, congregational or church singing is a central part of the faith-based worship activity. What is sung, how it is sung, why and when it is sung—all these considerations are infused with personal-community and cultural values and significances. A Christian church building is one of the few places in modern life that regularly resonates with the sound of people singing together. This communal music making is such an important part of worship experience that when some researchers M. Kropf and K. Nafziger, asked several Christian people, “What would you do if someone

²²Jack W. Hayford, *Worship His Majesty* (Ventura, CA: Regal, 1982), 22.

²³Paul Roberts, *Alternative Worship in the Church of England* (Cambridge, England: Grove, 1999), 5-14.

²⁴Ibid.

decided that from here on there would be no more singing in worship?” The people variously responded thus:

“Do you mean, what would I do besides leave?” “It would rob us of our church. We couldn’t go to a church that didn’t sing. Singing is the glue that holds worship together.” “I’d dry up. I would feel like something is being squeezed out of me. Even as you ask the question, it’s like someone putting a vice on me and draining everything out of me. I’m even getting short of breath now. I wouldn’t last long.”²⁵

Congregational singing seems to be significant to worshippers. However, within the broad, evangelical church tradition that forms a significant proportion of Protestant groups congregational song has been radically altered since the early 1990s. The changes seem to be based on many assumptions concerning musical style, preference, personal and cultural relevance and implementation has resulted in discontent and dislocation among some congregants and rejoicing among others. New songs, characterized by popular styles of text, music and instrumentation—guitars, electronic keyboard and drums – have in cases superseded the traditional chorale style hymns and revivalist songs accompanied by organ and piano. In many cases, hymnbooks have been replaced by projection of text and choirs have disappeared, giving way to self-sufficient, amplified, small vocal ensembles fronting the band. The complete ensemble is often called the “worship team.”

This shift in musical expression has generated widespread discussion and, in cases, contention and serious division among church members. These changes have not been confined to conservative, evangelical churches; they have affected all major Protestant denominations in the both hemispheres where the Christian church existed beginning from Euro-America to Afri-Asia continents, respectively. The most recent changes that have taken place in congregational song within the evangelical churches are clearly demarcated by boundaries created by generational preferences in music and style; “religious symbols and styles are a means by which a group, including a generational

²⁵M. Kropf and K. Nafziger, *Singing: A Mennonite Voice* (Scottsdale, PA: Herald, 2001) 25.

cohort, attempts to differentiate itself from another by means of a distinctive religious style.”²⁶ More specifically, J. W. Carroll and W. C. Roof recognize that the “choice of liturgy and music is more than a preference; it is a symbolic expression of identity and of religious meaning implicit within that identity.”²⁷ These deeper meanings which are being created or lost seem to depend on which generation has the most influence in any given congregation.

The twenty-first century is characterized and marked by succession of generations, and each with its sub-cultural characteristics and spiritual needs. Its social change is driven by technology and the culture’s priority is upon the individual. The challenge for the church today is to provide an alternative worship experience to meet this spirit of individualism by offering God’s transforming grace in Christian community. All over the world of Christendom, churches are customizing worship-music styles for particular demographic groups.²⁸

Contemporary worship music in local churches all over the world, namely the style generally termed “contemporary worship,” “charismatic worship,” or “modern worship,” presents an interesting example of a musical genre that is defined by its religious function as well as by its style. This music is performed primarily in Christian venues (churches, concerts, conferences, and other various church-related gatherings), and it often borrows from the much more commercialized Contemporary Christian Music genre, commonly referred to as “CCM.” While the repertoire for this genre has its roots embedded in the musical styles that fall under the umbrella term “rock and roll,” worship music differs from secular music (and even much of CCM) in terms of function,

²⁶J. W. Carroll and W. C. Roof, *Bridging Divided Worlds: Generational Cultures in Congregations* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2002), 10.

²⁷Ibid.

²⁸M. S. Hamilton, “The Triumph of the Praise Songs: How Guitars Beat out the Organ in the Worship Wars,” *Christianity Today* 43 (1999): 29-35.

preparation, administration, and performance location. Modern worship music is used, assessed, and managed in many new ways that music in previous eras of the church never was. The evangelical church music tradition has experienced a series of far-reaching transformations. Musical style has shifted from four-part hymns to a repertory of songs modeled on contemporary secular popular music styles known as variously “praise and worship music,” “contemporary worship music,” or simply “worship music.” This stylistic transformation has entailed multiple changes in how songs are mediated to congregations, how music-making in churches is socially structured, and how evangelicals understand the practice and theology of worship.

Though contemporary worship music has been linked from its inception in the latter half of the twentieth century to modernistic impact of networks of charismatic and evangelical churches in both north and south hemispheres, the sources in turn inform the creation and development of praise and worship music which have received little attention. This postmodern influence on praise and worship music has ebbed and flowed since its inception in the late 1960s; however, since the late 1990s, worship music has been strongly influenced by secular songs and artists.

Congregational singing in many Canadian evangelical churches has undergone a significant shift. Organs have been replaced by guitars and drums; hymnals are left in the rack in favor of text on a screen; hymns are out and compact pop-style worship songs are in. These changes have been welcomed by some worshippers but have caused consternation in others as local congregations have struggled with musical preferences and worship styles – a process that has often resulted in a “worship war.” Some congregations have remained musically traditional; some wholly embrace the new Praise and Worship songs, while others offer separate services for each musical taste. Some churches have opted to use both traditional and contemporary songs in one service. When singers accept the challenge to grow beyond expressive individualism, they may be able

to value and embrace a diverse church community with its differences in musical preference.

Characteristics of Contemporary Music

The twentieth century music reflects the influences of art and literature in a mechanical, atomic age. The emergence of pleasant sounding, pastel-colored impressionistic music led to experiments with twelve-tone music. This trend produced cerebral, atonal, often angular and disjointed musical effects. Other twentieth century musical experiments are with electronic music. Influences such as electronically amplified instruments and jazz, rock, and popular elements are associated with this period. Contemporary compositions vary widely, so the characteristics described in this paper are not the complete list, and not all these characteristics are present in every composition. The following are some general characteristics of contemporary music.

Harmony

Consonance is no longer in use in the present century. Dissonance became very important and in fact most of the piece is made up of dissonant chords. From the twentieth century one would not get the final fulfillment one expects. On the whole, most contemporary music sounds fantasy like, distant and mystifying.

Chord Structures

Chords are never as fundamental as it is in previous centuries. Polychords are created by placing one traditional chord over another. Fourth chords are also employed, whose chords are made up of notes that are a fourth apart instead of the usual three. Tone cluster is also created. Chords are made up of notes that are semitones apart it can be produced by striking on a group of adjacent keys of the piano.

Rhythm

The rhythmic vocabulary of both the 20th and 21st centuries is expanded with increased emphasis on irregularity and unpredictability. Meters can change every bar or so having an effect of imbalance. We may count: 1-2-3-4-5, 1-2-3, 1-2-3-4-5, 1-2-3 and so on. Polyrhythm may also be employed. It is similar to Brahms's cross rhythms with one voice playing 1-2, 1-2 and the other voice playing 1-2-3, 1-2-3.²⁹ Cross rhythm is a rhythm in which the regular pattern of accents of the prevailing meter is contradicted by a conflicting pattern and not merely a momentary displacement that leaves the prevailing meter fundamentally unchallenged.³⁰ For instance, if a musical work is scored for more than one instrument and the instruments are not playing in the same rhythm for instance, in the simplest possible way, a clarinet is playing in 4/4 time and a saxophone is playing in 3/4 time), this will be a cross-rhythm because the musical beats do not occur together.

Melody

Melody can be somehow very elusive in both the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. Composers advocated atonality (non-melodic sort of composition) and melodies that can be sung or hummed is rare.

Tone Color

During this post-modern era, tone color has become a more important element of music than it was ever before. It has a major role: creating variety, continuity and mood. In modern music, noise-like and percussive sounds are often used and instruments are often played at the top or the bottom of their register. Uncommon playing techniques have become normal. Flutter-tonguing and other special techniques are also employed to

²⁹Han Adolf Neunzig, *Johannes Brahms: Life and Times* (London: Haus, 2003), 125-27.

³⁰Don Michael Randel, ed., *New Harvard Dictionary of Music* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1986), 216.

make the music of twentieth and twenty-first centuries distinctive. Modern orchestral and chamber works often sound transparent. Individual tone colors are heard clearly. To bring the individuality of the different melodic lines, they play simultaneously. The composer will also assign different parts to instruments of different timbre in order to bring out their colors. Composers sometimes made use of noise makers such as sirens and typewriters to add color to the music. Piano is no longer used to provide the lyrical and singing tone of the Romantic. They are now used for percussive or jazz effect.

Influence of Contemporary Music on Church Worship

The advent of contemporary Christian music in the church of Jesus Christ calls for the examination within the scriptures of its influence on church worship. One of the major reasons local churches or denominations introduce contemporary music in the church worship service aims at attracting the younger generation and to retain them within their church peripheries. For others, they wish to be culturally relevant, in order to attract many people into the front door of the church house. These two reasons show the positive indicator of contemporary music, since it helps the local church experience numerical growth. Having noted the positive influence of contemporary music, it is proper to underscore its negative influence as well.

The contemporary music worship style lacks biblical principle. In the Old Testament God judged His people for false worship. In the Exodus, for example, God punished the people of Israel for both worshipping the golden calve idol, which the people called a god and the new music and dancing which eventually led them to immorality. Aaron led the people in dance and music to worship in Egyptian style. When compared, there is no difference between what took place then and now. The worship leader or music leader is most often the center of attraction and even members of the church tend to worship him or her, instead of God.

The current contemporary worship bespeaks consumerism, marketing and modern therapeutic orientation in its preaching, liturgy and music. The dangers of modern worship, with its long stretches of praise music, is not that one will be smitten by an angry God or lose salvation, but that one might not know God, properly. The music has shifted from rehearsing Christ's work in the history of redemption. Worship is not about man, but is about Christ. The truth is that too much praise music in the local church worship is about an individual's personal experience with God and not reflective of what worship ought to be, which is God's mission to the world, to save and restore the whole creative order. It is an epistemological shift from the objective work of God to an individual's subjective experience. Ron Owens in his book, *Return to Worship* asserts that the rise of the chorus finds the death of the hymn. As a result, one of the greatest teaching tools is stolen from this generation and consequently from the future generations. The great reformer, Martin Luther used the power of hymns as he sent out singing groups to teach the people doctrine (Col 3:16), which played a great part in the Reformation.³¹ Contemporary music is like serving the appetizer and forgetting the main course if the church neglect the hymns. Rick Warren in his book *The Purpose Driven Life* stated "One thing worship cost us is our self-centeredness." One cannot exalt God and oneself at the same time. One does not worship to be seen by others or please oneself. One deliberately shifts the focus off oneself. Contemporary music in worship is often about performance, sensuality, bodily movement brought about by the beat and rhythm of the music.

Choral and Congregational Praising or Singing

One of the controversies generating considerable interest among the Lord's

³¹Ron Owen, *Return to Worship: A God-Centered Approach* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1999).

people these days is the question of whether or not the use of choirs or choral is permissible in the worship assemblies of the New Testament church. In numerous places the utilization of such singing arrangements has already been implemented. Some churches have specially named groups with coordinated wardrobes. Others are clamoring for these special singing groups.

Musical entertainment is invading the church. As a people who have always argued their religious positions upon the basis of scriptural authority, it behooves them to ask: is choir singing in the church assembly authorized by the Scriptures? If it is not, then such cannot be condoned, no matter how popular the practice has become.

There is nothing about that argument that is remotely persuasive. This is because choirs are found before, during, and after the temple in the Old Testament. They are part of the temple worship, in the same way that prayer, praise, and sacrament are part of that worship, for reasons that in no way limit their use to a particular period in the history of salvation.

The New Testament shows us what seem to be choirs singing in heaven, never says anything that could be taken to forbid or even discourage the use of choirs in worship, and, in any case, tells us comparatively little about how to construct a worship service, in largest part, no doubt, because that instruction had been so comprehensively given in the Old Testament. The Bible is in favor of choral singing as a part of worship.

Choral Singing or Praising

Choral singing goes by several different names, all meaning basically the same thing. One may hear the terms choir, chorus, chorale, ensemble, harmony, or part-singing. All indicate that a number of people are singing together at the same time but on different musical lines. In one single passage of music there is a division of parts, all of which are sung together to form that one passage. One part may sing the basic melody of the music while the other parts sing the harmony, which are complementary lines of

music that make up the chords. The easiest analogy is to think of an orchestra or band. Thus a choir, chorale or chorus is a musical ensemble of singers. Choral music or praise, in turn, is the music written specifically for such an ensemble to perform. A body of singers who perform together as a group is called a choir or chorus.

The former term is very often applied to groups affiliated with a church (whether or not they actually occupy the choir) and the second to groups that perform in theatres or concert halls, but this distinction is far from rigid. The term “Choir” has the secondary definition of a subset of an ensemble; thus one speaks of the “woodwind choir” of an orchestra, or different “choirs” of voices and/or instruments in a polychoral composition. In typical 18th to 21st-century oratorios and masses, chorus or choir is usually understood to imply more than one singer per part, in contrast to the quartet of soloists also featured in these works.

Choirs are often led by a conductor or choirmaster. Most often choirs consist of four sections intended to sing in four part harmony, but there is no limit to the number of possible parts as long as there is a singer available to sing the part. As in the orchestra, there may be more than one person on a single part. The most common division of voices in a choir is four parts: soprano, alto, tenor, and bass (listed from highest voice to lowest voice). Choirs range from very casual gatherings to large professional choirs who record and perform regularly. The basic concept is the same in any circumstance, but the level of expertise may differ. A group of friends singing Christmas carols in harmony is a casual event and rarely involves rehearsal. There is also professional choir such as the Brooklyn Tabernacle Choir. This choir is very demanding and involves more training for a serious career choice on the part of the singer. Any time one sings with a number of other people, however, one will probably be singing in harmony and using the same techniques necessary for any ensemble singing.

Almost all churches have some sort of choir. Some are small and basic because of their parish size. Others are on a professional level and may be quite large. Most

church choirs have a policy of accepting anyone who wants to sing and then directing singers toward a more homogenous sound during rehearsal. Professional singers are often hired to join larger church choirs in order to support the sound. They may be hired as section leaders or cantors to lead the congregation. Rehearsals are usually held on a weekday evening and again before the service. Attendance is voluntary but expected if one sings in the service. Often the organist of the church is also the choir director and runs the rehearsal. Sight-reading is certainly helpful but usually not mandatory. If one does not read music, one will be learning one's part by ear, which means one listens to it and then remember the music, reading only the words. The material is almost always religious in content, but some churches have incorporated appropriate folk music into their services.

Congregational Praising or Singing

During much of the Middle Ages, singing in worship was hijacked from believers and relegated to only the officials conducting mass. However, amidst the Protestant Reformation in the 16th century, congregational singing found its voice again. "The Reformation gained much of its impetus and its strength from the desire to give back not only the Bible but also the hymns to the people."³² From the Reformation onwards, the argument against choirs had largely been that they intruded on the congregation's right of participation. This was a natural enough concern, given that congregational participation had diminished virtually to the vanishing point in much of medieval worship. Men such as Martin Luther began translating scripture and composing songs (such as "A Mighty Fortress") that put biblical doctrine in language accessible to the commoners. Kenneth Osbeck rightly concluded that "congregational singing is one of

³²Austin C. Lovelace and William B. Rice, *Music and Worship in the Church: The Complete Resource of Musician, Minister and Layperson* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1987), 154.

the most important expressions of one of the basic tenets of the evangelical position, that of the priesthood of the individual believer.”³³

Alternative Praising or Singing

There have been churches in which choirs do supplant the congregation’s own singing. However, as the Bible itself demonstrates, in a properly ordered worship, both choir and congregation should have a proper role. The essential value of a choir, from biblical times to the present day, has been its ability, more than that of the congregation, to glorify the words of worship with the beauty of music.

Few Christians have not had the experience of being stirred by the beauty of a sacred text sung well by a choir as part of a service of worship. In fact it was precisely the beauty of music well sung and the power of words when set to such music that tempted the church at times in her history to use the choir to such an extent that it supplanted the congregation’s own voice of praise. The attitude of contemporary churches is mixed in an effort to be relevant, especially with the use of church choirs. There has been a paradigm shift when it comes to the church choir being used in a worship service. The leadership of many local churches has determined that choirs and the style of music choirs presented were no longer relevant to postmodern world.

The use of church choirs in worship is a serious issue, in that it affects the involvement of church members who want to use their musical gifts in worship. It also impacts the preparation and education of future worship leaders, also known as ministers of music. The contemporary service predominantly uses a band, vocal singers, and performs the most recent praise and worship songs with an occasional hymn. Usually, there is no choir in the contemporary service. If there is a choir, it would be more of a choir that backs up the vocal singers and band.

³³Kenneth W. Osbeck, *The Ministry of Music: A Complete Handbook for the Music Leader in the Local Church* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2010), 60.

In the common parlance of evangelical worship, songs are categorized as either “traditional” or “contemporary.” In a church that offers a “blended” worship service, it is expected that both these categories of songs will be represented. The traditional materials are normally selected from a hymnal and referred to as “hymns” and the contemporary songs are gleaned from a variety of mostly media-based sources – CD’s, tapes, video tapes, DVD’s as well as published collections. They are referred to as “choruses.”

In a blended worship style, both types are presented in differing proportions and musical formats that varies from church to church. Therefore, blended as a category of worship style is locally defined in its practice and musical outworking. Taken as a whole, the musical materials used in worship are assumed meaningful to the entire congregation, given that some will prefer certain styles to others. A blended worship format allows all ages to experience a broader range of song material than that of exclusively contemporary or traditional, thus their singing experience is enlarged.

Conclusion

In analysis of congregational songs and how they are presented in the services, one concludes that, although a strict numerical balance is maintained between hymns and choruses sung by the congregation, the overall ethos of the service is weighted to traditional music. The organ prelude, the organ as the prominent accompaniment for the hymns, hymns interspersed with other acts of worship, the regular presence of a choir, the printed order of service in the bulletin and the display of hymn numbers in church bulletin, the availability of hymnals—all these ingredients seem to be a conscious effort to maintain the structure, content and communication modes of a traditional evangelical worship service while adding projected text, a few current choruses and a band to accompany them. Nothing has been taken away from the expectations formed over the years.

The diversity is viewed as a uniting force, presuming that each person will be

satisfied by some of their music being offered as congregational song. In so doing, it is hoped that the identity of the church will remain intact, coalescing around the compromise represented in the blend. However, what has happened to the divisive potential of stylistic preference? Is this not a major motivating factor in the creation of the blended service? Do feelings of personal attachment to musical style disappear or alter in the blend? This study has shown that tensions associated with stylistic preference are still alive among some in the blended congregation and more so in those who prefer what in reality is the minority style: the chorus and its attendant expressive individualism.

A church that offers a musically blended service is uniquely positioned in modern society as one of few institutions where generations can regularly meet and mix, to work out and share a significant communal experience of spiritual, educational and cultural dimensions. This form of worship needs to be re-examined by church leaders as perhaps one of the best ways to publicly embody and demonstrate the selflessness that should be at the core of Christian church life.

CHAPTER 4

THE PROJECT METHODOLOGY

This chapter contains the contents of the fifteen week's survey, education, and practices for the improvement of church worship through integrating the praise of the choir and the congregation, which took place at Beautiful Gate Church in Virginia. The purpose and method is as follows: First, it focused on experiencing God's presence at worship by improving the integration of choral and congregational praise. Second, it focused on building church members firmly as the body of Christ by improving worship. Third, it focused on expanding the Kingdom of God through lively and dynamic worship. This project was conducted from February 26, through June 3, 2012.

Pre-Survey

For the first (February 26) and the second weeks (March 4), the choir members and congregation were asked to fill out a survey. This survey was designed to evaluate the current worship system. The project required participants to sign their name on the survey for ease of comparing the data when the same survey was taken at the middle and the end of the project.¹

Training of Choir

Week 3 (March 11th, 2012)

The senior pastor, Seongmoo Heo, taught choir members what the Bible teaches about worship for forty minutes (10:00 to 10:40 AM). He touched on four topics,

¹All 20 choir members answered to the survey; 42 adult members answered to the survey; the survey can be found in Appendices 1 and 2.

such as the basic understanding of worship, the church for worship, the subject of worship, and the attitude of worshippers. First, concerning the basic understanding of worship, he summarized and taught briefly core things, such as, the definition of worship and the theological points of worship.

The meaning of worship. The English word “worship” comes from the word “*weorthscipe*” of Anglo Saxon, which is the compound word of “worth” and “ship” (status). Its meaning is to give the best worth to God deserved of respect and nobility. One defines worship as the conversational relationship of blessing and response, in which God is the master and the human must respond.

Concerning the theological points of worship, first, worship is the meeting place of God and His children. Second, worship focuses on the victory of Jesus Christ’s resurrection from the Cross. Third, the power of Holy Spirit that comes through worship can help church members praise, pray, and preach the gospel to the world. Fourth, worship must be the united act of the church community, not an individual one. Finally, in regard to the attitudes of the worshippers, since God is the creator and the ruler of the universe, He knows the minds of the worshippers (Acts 1:24, Rom 8:27) and demands they worship Him in Spirit and in Truth (John 4:23).

Week 4 (March 18th, 2012)

I gave choir members a biblical lesson about praise. The lecture ran from 10:00 to 10:40 AM. Since it was a short time, I explained the core values only from the handouts.

The meaning of praise. Several words were used to mean “praise” in the Old Testament. First, *Hallel* (1 Chr 16:4, Pss 56:3, 4, 10, 84:4, 102:18, etc.); it has the meaning of “praise,” “boast,” or “celebrate.” This word is used almost 100 times in the Old Testament. The term emphasizes the need of praise, which always is used in the

imperative form. Second, *Yada* (Gen 29:35, 49:8, 2 Chr 20:21, Pss 9:1, 95:2, etc.); it is to “confess” or “praise,” and it is the confession of who God is, and what God has done.

Third, *Barak* (Job 1:21, Ps 103:1-2, Neh 9:5, 2 Chr 6:13-14, etc.) means to “bless” or “kneel down,” and it is used 270 times in the Old Testament. Fourth, *Zamir* (Judg 5:3, 2 Sam 22:50, Pss 7:17, 9:2, 33:2, 71:22, 104:33, 146:2, 149:3, etc.); it is to “play some musical instrument.” Fifth, *Shabach* (Pss 63:3, 117:1, 145:4, 147:12, etc.); it is to “shout,” and it describes the exclamatory praise.

Seventh, *Rum* (Pss 18:46, 30:1, etc.); its meaning is “high,” and it expresses the act of magnifying God as the essence of praise. Eighth, *Shir* (Pss 30, 65, 48, 66, 120 through 134); it is to “sing,” and it considers praise as magnifying God with song or music. Besides these ones, various words such as “exalt,” “turn around with joy,” “dance,” “applause,” “respect,” “boast,” “witness,” and so on are all used to denote praise in the Old Testament.

There are many Greek words for praise in the New Testament. First, *Ioneo* (Luke 2:13, 2:20, 18:43, 19:37, Acts 3:8-9, Rev 19:5, Matt 21:16, etc.); it is translated from the Hebrew *Hallah*. Second, *Yulogeo* (2 Cor 1:3, 1 Pet 1:3, Jas 3:10, Luke 1:64, Mark 10:16, Eph 1:3); like the Hebrew *Barak*, and it also means to “bless.” Third, *Exomologeo* (Matt 11:25, Rom 15:9); it is to “praise” or “confess.” Fourth, *Whimneo* (Heb 2:12, Eph 5:19, Col 3:16); it is to “praise God with chorus.” Fifth, *Megalruno* (Luke 1:46, Acts 10:46, Phil 1:20); it means to “expand greatly” and means “praise” or “magnify” in the Bible.²

The need of praise in worship. The reasons why human beings should worship God are as followings. First, praise is the commandment of God. Second, Second, God is the master of praise. Third, praise is the attribute of God. Fourth, praise is

²Myeonghwan Kim, *The Temple of Praising* (Seoul, Korea: New Song, 1999), 21-32.

the purpose of creation (Ps 148). This is based on Isaiah 43:21.” The people whom I formed for Myself will declare My praise.” I explained this verse to the choir members for about ten minutes. Psalm 22:3 was also explained. Particularly, the teaching of large, organized, and professional choirs in the Chronicles (1 Chr 23, etc.) was the peak of this lecture.

The method of praise. The Bible shows various methods of praise. First, praise should be done “with all hearts” (Ps 86:12). Second, praise must be “the voice of joy and festival” (Pss 42:4, 47:1, 67:4, 95:1, 100:2, 2 Chr 23:18, 29:30, etc.). Third, “praise greatly” (1 Chr 16:25, Pss 48:1, 96:4.). Fourth, “praise gloriously” (Ps 66:2, Isa 43:7, Jer 33:9, Luke 2:20, Phil 1:11, etc.).

Fifth, praise “with a new song” (Pss 33:3, 40:3, 96:1, 144:9, 149:1, Isa 42:10, Rev 5:9, etc.). Sixth, praise “with dance and clap” (Pss 47:1, 71:22, 98:5, 147:7, 149:3). Seventh, praise with “shout” (2 Chr 20:19, Neh 12:42, Pss 47:1, 109:30, 145:3, 150:5, Luke 19:37, 1 Chr 23:5, 2 Chr 25:7, Rev 5:12, Isa 6:1-4).

Considering these Bible verses, the teacher emphasized that choir members must spend at least two hours in memorizing the music piece for one hour worship. Especially, he taught that the absence or tardiness was not acceptable for praise to God. He also taught the function and role of the choir members. Paul Westermeyer states the role of the choir is as follows: First, the choir leads worship in the music portion on behalf of the pastor. Second, the choir performs to help the congregation praise in worship. Third, the choir serves in worship entirely as the pastor does.³

William Hooper also emphasizes the role of the choir as follows: First, the choir leads the congregation by singing. Second, the choir serves to lead worship as

³Paul Westermeyer, *The Church Musician* (San Francisco: Harper& Row Publishers, 1988), 44.

priests. Third, the choir plays the role of prophet.⁴ The choir and congregation do not praise differently, and it does not just help lead the congregation to sing. The congregation is not an observer, but they sing together with the choir. Choir members serve in the prophetic role to preach the word of God in music. In short, the role and mission of the choir is to lead the congregation through music, sing with the congregation, and preach the gospel to the congregation.

Training of Congregation

Week 5 (March 25th, 2012)

The lecture ran from 1:10 through 1:40 in the afternoon after Sunday worship and fellowship. Except for the lunch servers, treasurers, custodians, and the people who went home after worship (81 people), a total of 48 persons attended the lecture. Even though only 60 percent of the congregation attended, most of all the ministers and core members were present.

The training was similar to that for choir members, but I excluded the explanation about the original languages. I explained the definition of worship, praise, and the future change of worship. All attendants practiced the new praise system which would start the next week.

The Practice in the Real Worship

Week 6 (April 1st, 2012)

The opening song was “At That Time, the Crowds Nailed Three Nails” by an anonymous writer. A duet composed of one soprano and one tenor sang the first verse. The soprano and tenor sang the second verse together in the high keys. This piece is composed of four parts, but only the two-part harmony was beautiful. The tenor sang the alto part in the same octave. The choir used four parts (soprano, alto, tenor, and bass) to

⁴William L. Hooper, *Ministry & Musicians* (Nashville: Broadman, 1986), 76.

sing the third verse. The choir and congregation sang the fourth verse together.

The second order was the opening prayer by the senior pastor. The third one was three consecutive praises concerning the passion of Christ as a medley. At this time, the choir sang with longing for the Lord, who indwells in the praise (Ps 22:3). The first one was “O, Sacred Head, Now Wounded.” This song can be more inspirational when singing in unison rather than in harmony.

Thus, the choir sang the first verse in unison. The second verse was sung in harmony, and the third verse was sung together in parts, singing with congregation. The next one was “When I Survey the Wondrous Cross.” This piece is of the confession style and was written by Isaac Watts in 1707, which has a fine harmony and moving lyrics. The conductor asked the choir to sing with an attitude of confession to God and make the congregation long for fellowship with God. Since it was harmonized in all four parts, this part was taught and prepared with sincerity. The choir and the congregation sang this piece together. At this time, the choir did in parts.

The third one was “Marvelous Grace of Our Loving Lord.” This was written by John Newton in the early twentieth century (1911) and expressed the grace of the Lord cleansing our sins by the cross. The choir and congregation also sang this praise together. The music minister asked the choir members to sing while meditating on the grace of the Lord. The congregation could follow in the same spiritual manner. It focused on encountering with the Lord, and at this time five people (one of each part and I) were leading the praise in front of the pulpit with the microphone.

The next order was to pray for the nation, country, and missionaries. Also the leaders encouraged the congregation to have a humble mind in the season of the Passion of the Christ and Palm Sunday. Consequently, it was followed by the prayer song and the special song of the choir, “Jesus Shed His Blood for Me.” The choir song was sung as an offering of music to God. The congregation was not an audience; rather, they participated in praise for the improvement of worship. This piece was the work of Fanny Crosby who

was blind and wrote more than 8,000 pieces. This hymn harmonized well in the verses and music. This hymn made many people return to and kneel down before the Lord.

The choir sang the first three verses, and all the worshippers (choir and congregation) sang the last verse. In the last verse, the congregation was asked to stand up. However, half of them did not stand. It might not have been familiar to them. The next was the leading by the pastor in a Scripture reading, preaching, and offering. Concerning the benediction, a doxology was sung by the choir for dismissal. The benediction song was written by Hung Pyo Hong, the professor of Seoul Presbyterian Seminary.

The content of the benediction song is as follows. “In the blessing of the Lord, the blessed children of God, the step into the world, The Lord, grant them the victory.” The choir sang this part with four parts singing. Next, the refrain part “This is my story, this is my song, praising my Saviour all the daylong; this is my story, this is my song, praising my Saviour all the daylong” was sung with the congregation. Since it was the first time for the choir and congregation to sing songs, they were not accustomed to this new system. The indifference among the congregation was again observed during praising time.

Week 7 (April 8th, 2012)

The opening song, “Low in the Grave He Lay,” was sung together. The choir stood on the stage singing their parts, and four leaders of praise were leading using microphone (one from each part). Since this piece has good harmony and the tempo changes smoothly, the first part was sung slowly and softly, and the refrain part was sung quickly and vividly just as the grave opened suddenly. This format enabled one to experience the joy of the resurrection.

Next, the time of praise medley was followed by the prayer of resurrection (the previous week was done by the pastor, but this week I presided over the worship before

the sermon). The first piece was “Because He Lives” the gospel song by William J. Gaither. The second piece was “Thine is the Glory.” The content of this hymn is to glorify the resurrected Lord and praise the resurrection of the Lord. The content and the melody were well harmonized. The harmony was well-crafted. The choir and congregation became unified in singing aloud like many streams of the fountain as the Bible expresses.

However, the indifferent, senseless, and customary praise of the congregation still existed even though it was less than last week. It seemed to be due to the problem of faith or the lack of confidence in their salvation. The author prayed that they would experience the Lord through praise. The third praise was “Christ, the Lord, is Risen Today” in an antipone style (the choir sang first and the congregation followed). The choir sang the first part and congregation sang the “halleluia” part.

At this time, I directed both the choir and the congregation when they were singing. For the first two verses, it was somewhat awkward, but for the last two verses they followed well. Then, the corporate prayer (for nation and country, America and Korea and Korean churches) was followed by “The Strife is O’er, the Battle Done,” as a choir special song. The choir sang the three ‘Alleluia’ parts (seven bars) in the first part of the song, and then the congregation sang the same part.

Some in the congregation, however, were not following well yet. After the sermon, offering, and benediction, the benediction song was sung with congregation, “Because He lives, I can face tomorrow. Because He lives, all fear is gone. Because I know He holds the future, and life is worth the living just because He lives” instead of the refrain part of the song “This is my story, this is my song, praising my Saviour all the day long,” which was sung last week. And then, worship was finished.

After two practices of the new worship system, there was an opinion to include more recent gospel songs for the children and youth groups. The opinion was expressed

that the modern music was only for the youth, since the adults did not know this. The adults must learn the recent songs of the youth.

Week 8 (April 15th, 2012)

The opening song was “My God is the King” (written by Hah Stephen /Arranged by Jung Pyo Jong). The choir sang the first verse, and congregation sang the second verse with the back chorus of the choir with four parts. Since the melody was known well to congregation and the harmony was beautifully arranged, it was fantastic. Two modern gospel songs and two hymnals were followed by the opening prayer of the music pastor. They were well blended in balance.

The first piece, “Lord, I lift Your Name on High” by Rick Founds, was sung together. The content of the song was “Lord, I lift your name on high Lord, I love to sing your praises with His incarnation, cross, resurrection, and ascending” which is a short gospel. The rhythm was a little fast, but the adults followed well. The content of the second piece was “I lay down the mastership of me, come forth to the Lord and love Him most, the love of the Lord loves me in the rough wave and deep sea in the whispering me, the rock of my soul, I will stand on the love” by Seung Yon Jeon. Even though the song was short, it touched a number of youths and adults’ hearts.

The third and fourth songs were traditional hymns such as “Far Away in the Depths of My Spirit.” The choir only sang the first verse, and a duet of the soprano and the alto part sang the second verse. The third and fourth verses were sung with audience in melody from the altos and in alto line for soprano and tenor part in one octave high. It seemed to be a wonderful harmony. The refrain part of this piece, “Peace, peace, coming down from the father above! Sweep over my spirit forever, I pray in fathomless billows of love” was sung by the congregation on each verse.

The next piece was “Have you been to the cross,” and this was similar style with “Go, carry the burden to Jesus” and in the same key. The first verse was sung only

by the choir, and rest of the verses was sung together by the choir and the congregation. The choir did it well, but the congregation did not do well.

Then, the special song of choir was the arrangement as the descant of “Jesus, I my cross have taken.” The first three verses were sung in choir with four parts but the second and third verses were accompanied by the descant of a soloist. After the interlude, the fourth verse was sung by the congregation for only the melody, and all sopranos in descant. The worship was completed with the song which was the same as the previous week on the resurrection Sunday after the sermon, offering, and benediction.

Week 9 (April 22nd, 2012)

The opening song of this week is “Jesus at Your name” by Chris Bowater for arrangement for the choir and congregation. “Jesus at your name we bow the knee. And acknowledge you as Lord. You are the Christ, You are the Lord. Through your Spirit, in our lives we know who you are” (the content of first part) was the praising God directly and was arranged as beautiful harmony. Until this part, the soprano and congregation sang the melody and the other choir parts sang parts. The other parts were sung repeatedly by congregation in melody, and the choir sang in each part as the four parts. The beginning was very touching. The next was designed to facilitate for unbelievers to encounter God with praise after corporate prayer.

The first piece “Everlasting God” by Brenton Brown and Ken Riley focused on the youth, which was fast and flowing song, and adult can follow easily. “Strength will rise as we wait upon the Lord, our God, You reign forever, our hope, our strong deliverer, you are the everlasting God, you do not faint, you won't grow weary, you're the defender of the weak, you comfort those in need, you lift us up on wings like eagles.” This song provided worshippers with some consolation and comfort. The next piece was “Praise the Lord in all situations, the Lord will be your great reward and great help. When you seek the face of the Lord, the spirit of the Lord will be poured, let us see you in the great love.

My spirit is decided and seeks for the Lord through the eye of faith. When you are praising the Lord, the kingdom of the Lord is be present, let us see you, your everlasting kingdom” by Young Min Kim.

The two pieces above could be sung by the adults and seemed to usher in the presence of the kingdom of the Lord during the praise. The next was “Majestic sweetness sits enthroned upon the saviour’s brow, His head with radiant glories crowned, His lips with grace O’erflow,“ and was praising Jesus directly.

This piece was sung all together with choir and congregation, soprano sang in the alto part from the second verse in one octave high, and alto in melody, and men sang in their parts. It was majestic and beautiful. The next piece was “Amazing Grace.” This piece was written by John Newton who was a captain of a slave-ship, and was famous for being used for helping many people to return to the Lord. Musically it was the same with “Majestic sweetness sits enthroned upon the saviour’s brow, His head with radiant glories crowned, His lips with grace O’erflow.”

The special choir song of this week, “Only Trust Him” by Noel Benson, was in the gospel style in four parts. The content was gospel and the style of the piece was ever-changing. It began in unison with men at first, and expressed softly and beautifully with a ladies duet. After then, all four parts sang their parts and then women sang in different style with changing code (key), and at the same time, the low part (alto and bass) sang in descant style. Next, all choir members sang in unison. At this time, the congregation performed along. Next, the choir led the pace and made four part harmonies.

Last, all worshippers praised the salvation of the Lord with soft and tensioned voice diametrically. Musical interpretation in this time was the content to educate the choir during the rehearsal time, and practiced with this, and worshipped with this feeling from the practice time. After sermon and offering, the benediction song was as following.

Mid-Survey

Week 10 (April 29th, 2012)

The author asked choir members, church ministers, and congregation to fill out the survey again. This survey was designed to evaluate the new worship system of integrating praise of choir and congregation.

Response of choir members. Overall, they do not seem to be accustomed to the worship and praise system. The choir members also seem to be nervous in the standing at the pulpit. Thus, the author made a decision that only a soloist would be standing in the pulpit.

Response of ministers. Commonly agreed, the youth minister suggested that English word be provided for the youth. Therefore, an attempt was made to split the singing 50/50 as much as possible in Korean and English.

Response of congregation. Their opinion was all three categories such as very good, good, and not bad. It was also said that the people who were working as remaining in standing at their work place had a hard time standing while singing. As expected, since the response was becoming good, and worship was improving in mature condition, it will be performed for three weeks more reflecting some suggestions.

Week 11 (May 6th, 2012)

This week, opening song was sung of “My God is the King” beautifully. Following the opening prayer, there was the time of encountering the Lord who dwells in the praise. The first piece was “We worship” by Rose Park. It was sung in Korean first, and sung in English twice, and the prelude was played with the trumpet by the youth. “Perfect my Lord, you guide me in the righteous way and praise you about what the Lord has done and your glory, we worship you, we praise you. You are magnified alone.” It was sung all together prayerfully. The next praise is “Holy and Anointed One” by John

Bamett, and it was sung in English and Korean in turn and the adults and students felt the moving of the Spirit.

The third and fourth pieces were the traditional hymn. The hymn “I’d rather Have in Jesus,” was sung all together, and the lyrics and music was moving and it was touching as well. It was also sung in English and Korean. The next piece was “Blessed Assurance, Jesus is Mine.” It was sung all together and the adults could sing in English because of the easy lyrics. Especially, high voice parts (soprano and tenor) sang in the tenor part, and the melody was sung by the congregation.

After corporate prayer (repentance prayer, prayer for the heartbreaking spirit), the special song of the choir was “Looking at the Lord Only” by Sung Ho Park. After the sermon and offering, the worship was finished with the benediction song

Week 12 (May 13th, 2012)

The opening song was “Jesus at Your name” and after opening prayer, the time of meeting with the Lord was sung of “Lord, I Lift Your Name on High” by Rick Founds in English at first. The youth group was singing so well and the adult was following because of easy lyrics after listening at first. The second piece was “Jesus We Enthroned You” by Paul Kyle. It also performed in the same atmosphere with the first music. The next was “There’s Peace in My Heart” and “Saviour, Thy Dying Love.” These pieces had a commonality of beautiful harmony and the difference was the bright and cheerful.

The choir special song was arranged by William Shrubsole for choir from “All Hail the Power of Jesus’ Name.” This piece was to praise God directly in the content, and the style of the piece had much beat and code and that last part was sung together. After the sermon and offering, the benediction song was “Take My Life, and Let It Be Consecrated.” Since a family with English-speaking members came to church, English caption was on the screen. Since the Korean hymn was almost similar to this, it was sung in two languages.

Week 13 (May 20th, 2012)

Beginning with “My God is the King” sung by the congregation, the opening prayer and the first song were followed. The first song was “You Are My All In All” by Dennis Jernigan. It was translated into Korean, and sung in many churches. It was little bit fast but the lyric was easy and excellent and all congregation followed well. The next piece was “Draw me closer” by Kelly Carpenter which was printed in English and Korean, and it seemed no problem to sing together for the students and adults. The next one is “Thou, My Everlasting Portion” and “When Peace, Like a River, Attended my Way.” These two pieces were good in harmony and similar in style.

The choir sang this piece in four parts, and congregation sang in melody. Since the song has many changes within it, the choir and congregation held many practices. However, it was still hard for our choir to sing it. Almost the last part of the song, eight measures, “Glory, glory Halleluia the Lord Jesus is coming,” was for congregation. Congregation sang this part in melody, and the choir sang it in harmony. It was fantastic. After the sermon and offering, the benediction song was “The Lord’s Prayer” by A. H. Malotte which was sung by the choir in four parts and congregation in melody, and one white-Caucasian member in English.

Post-Survey

Week 14 (May 27th, 2012)

Last survey was given to all the church members. Including 48 persons who participated in the first questionnaire, the total of sixty persons responded to the questionnaires and it was performed smoothly.

Evaluation

Week 15 (June 3rd, 2012)

The evaluation ran from 1:30 to 2:00 in the afternoon on the third day of June, and all 12 persons such as choir chairman, executive, treasurer, two accompanists, music

minister (choir director), associate minister, youth group minister, praise team leader (three soloists) were attended to this meeting. The meeting was well performed, and all responded positively because of their expectation for the change. At first, this attempt was little awkward, but the choir members, praise team leaders, and congregations all could adjust to this system fast and become accustomed to this. Finally the public opinion was that the worship atmosphere was enthusiastic.

This meeting was composed of mostly the younger generation because there were some elderly people who were difficult to stand while praising. Considering this group, even there was one person, the collected opinion was to persist this system of worship.

Conclusion

All the choir members and congregation participated in this fifteen week project. Fortunately, there were none of them who opposed or refused, and all worshippers were thankful to have and to continue this style of worship. Even though the result was more positive than expected, there were several suggestions for the music director to improve the new worship system.

First, my first task is to create more music such as “My God is the “Jesus at Your name,” and “Battle Hymn” for integrating praise of congregation and choir. Even if a song is so excellent, it cannot last long for the congregation. It can last only three months. Therefore, it is necessary to have more audience pieces.

The second task is the selection. The piece must be shared by new and old generations together. Until today, the musical piece must be sung easily even in English to the adult, and modern style in music which can be sung easily together. Since recent emerging music is too fast and intricate in rhythm, the older generation cannot follow them. If these are introduced to worship, the older generation will have to be observers. To make the best use of network and internet of the desirable musicians, constant

research and try for the best praise to God in worship becomes a task incumbent upon music minister.

However, it is not accomplished by the plan of only one person, music minister. All the choir members who are leading the worship music must settle the basis for this change of ministry. The human plan, knowledge, and wisdom can have a limitation. Thus, for this ministry, much work has to be done in advance.

Prayer

I suggest that prayer shall be the starting point for praise ministry in worship. It is to prepare with prayer, and to practice with prayer. The prayer is the foundational basis of all, and is the priority for the stable ministry. In the First Thessalonians, a “pray without ceasing” (1 Thess 5:17) is recommended. This verse suggests that prayer cannot be a custom or ritual, but it must be done in any and all situation.

If the choir has good musical skills and sings well without prayer, the leader of the choir is likely to take the single line and it cannot be known when the leader should step down. Even though the choir is perfect musically but God does not help them, it is just the expression of skillful musicians. Therefore, all worshippers are to pray constantly.

The Leading of Holy Spirit

Sometimes, there would be some obstacles to worship. All those things, however, cannot be solved by human power, but only by trusting in the Holy Spirit completely. When the Holy Spirit is with somebody, he can be changed. When he is changed, the wondrous work of God can be among worshippers. When the choir members gather and pray together with passion, worship will be one in perfect sense.

Share the Vision Together

When one lifts up an intercessory prayer for someone else or a group, the life of individual praying person will be changed. When the mind is open to the leading of the

Holy Spirit, and God's grand plan and revelation, which was unknown before, will be manifested by the Holy Spirit Himself.

CHAPTER 5

PROJECT EVALUATION

In chapter 5, I evaluate the project. I discuss the purposes and the goals of the project again. I also discuss the strengths, weaknesses, and overall effectiveness of the project. Finally, I offer theological and personal reflections on the project as a whole before I made a final conclusion.

Evaluation of Purpose

The purpose of this project, as already stated in chapter 1, was to improve corporate worship by integrating praise of the choir and that of the congregation. One can define worship as a personal fellowship with God. Most worshippers, however, do not have an intimate fellowship with God. They habitually attend church worship services. Therefore, I have been searching for biblical and theological solutions of worship and praise for worshippers to come closer to God. One of them is integrating praise of choir and congregation in worship.

Traditionally, church choir and the congregation sing songs separately. In other words, the choir takes up special songs with four chords alone during worship. Therefore, the congregation cannot help but be left as worship observers and not worshippers. This project, however, gives the choir and the congregation an opportunity to sing songs together and have the congregation participate vividly and actively in praise during worship.

Generally speaking, the worship of Beautiful Gate Church improved by this project significantly than the author expected. The church members' attitude to worship was also improved. They became more enthusiastic toward worship than before. I

however, am concerned that the congregation returns to the old habit because of repeating worship systems. Therefore, it is imperative to make small changes to every worship service.

Evaluation of Goals

In the beginning, four goals were suggested. The first goal was to help the congregation of Beautiful Gate Church to take a more enthusiastic part in praising God during the worship services by integrating the choral and the congregational praise. For the evaluation of this first goal, the author conducted three surveys (pre-, mid, and post-surveys). The question was “How often Do You Sing Songs During Worship?” The multiple choice answers were (1) every song, (2) 50 percent of them, and (3) not at all.

For the pre-survey, 42 church members gave answers to the question. Twenty-two members chose the second or third answer. For the mid-survey, 14 members chose the second or third answer. For the last survey, 7 members chose the second or third answer. In other words, the congregation’s participation in praise increased from 50 percent to 83 percent after the completion of this project.

The second goal was to encourage the members of Beautiful Gate Church to participate not only in the worship services, but in other church activities more frequently. For the evaluation of this second goal, I took three surveys. The question was “How often Do You Attend Other Activities except for Worship Services?” The multiple choice answers were (1) every activity, (2) 50 percent of them, and (3) not at all.

Thirty-five among 42 church members chose the second or third answer for the pre-survey. For the mid-survey, 23 members chose the second or third answer. For the post-survey, 11 members chose the second or third answer. In other words, after completion of this project, the congregation’s attendance of other church activities increased from 17 percent to 65 percent. For example, now twice as many church

members continue to participate in cleaning the church facility on Saturdays and serving lunches on Sundays.

The third goal was to encourage church members to witness to non-believers about Jesus Christ. It was suggested that by working on the first two goals, the church would equip its members with a renewed spirit to share the gospel as witnesses to the community. The result had a greater impact than the author expected. For the evaluation of this third goal, the author conducted three surveys. The question was “How often Do You Share the Gospel as Witness to Your Community?” The multiple choices were (1) three times a week, (2) twice a week, (3) once a week, and (4) not at all.

For the pre-survey, forty members among 42 church members chose the second, third, or fourth answers. For the mid-survey, 30 members chose the second, third, or fourth answer. For the post-survey, 21 members chose the second, third, or fourth answer. In other words, after completion of this project, the congregation’s participation in sharing the gospel increased from 4 percent to 50 percent.

Beautiful Gate Church has a witness team which shares the gospel once a week. They usually hand out gospel tracks and sing gospel songs in front of Korean grocery markets. The attendance number of this program was fewer than 10 before the project was conducted. The attendance number, however, increased to around 20 members after the project was completed.

The fourth goal of the project was to help church members understand the biblical concepts of praise and worship. I gave lectures about biblical praise and worship to the congregation. I conducted three surveys on the congregation’s understanding of the concept of worship and praise. For the pre-survey, all 42 members answered “no” to the question, “Do You Know the Biblical Concept of Worship and Praise?” Thirty members, however, answered “yes” to the question for the mid-survey. Finally, all 42 members answered “yes” to the question for the post-survey.

Strengths

Traditionally, Korean churches have a number of worship services excluding Sunday service. For example, there are Wednesday services, Friday prayer services, and dawn prayer services. These services have been a pavement for an individual's spiritual maturity growth and rapid Korean church growth. Since the Worship and Praise movement started in the late 1980s, there have been significant changes in the landscape of Korean churches.

One of them is Korean churches have a new insight into worship. However, this movement has had influence largely only on younger church members. Senior church members dislike contemporary worship styles so that they attend worship services after the Worship and Praise session. This is the result of churches imitating other churches without any consideration of their churches' situation and the shortage of professional worship leaders.

At this point, a large number of church ministers and members have different opinions various worship styles, being that traditional or contemporary. Although there are negative opinions from conservative church members who ignore the importance of "praise and worship" during worship, some of them prefer more dynamic praise and worship and are ready for change. Considering this recent church situation, this project is timely and appropriate.

This project has some strong points. First, all church members, including senior ones, can participate in this new praise system without generation gaps. Second, all church members including the congregation can become an integral part of worship by singing songs together. Third, this is a praise system which the Old and New Testaments support.

Weaknesses

Churches that wish to use this project must have a choir. Even churches that

number of members must have a congregation to sing songs with choir during worship. Therefore, one of weaknesses of this project is that there are a great number of small churches which lack human resources to organize a choir. Another weakness is that even churches that can afford to organize choirs have few professional or musically trained praise or worship leaders to lead their worship services.

For these reasons, it is impossible for all churches to follow this worship system. Churches, however, that have well-trained leaders and wish to change current worship systems, can apply this project to their worships. To share a personal testimony, when the author came to a small church as a music minister, the church had just twenty church members. The writer, however, organized a choir which was also a congregation and whose worship was very satisfying due to the power of praise.

What I Would Do Differently

I found a number of things to improve this project. First of all, all church members could not attend the survey and training sessions. Only about 60 percent of the church members attended because the other 40 percent had another task at the same time. If I had another chance to conduct this project, I would give more information on this topic to the congregation and train them in a series of sermons before the project.

Second, there was a problem of choosing songs. I chose “O, Sacred Head, Now Wounded” as the first piece of music of week six. The result was not as satisfying as the author expected. I suggest that the worship leader and the congregation take over the melody part, that the soprano and the tenor do tenor part, and that the alto and the base do their own parts. This change will make the music more powerful and allow the verses which describe the passion of Christ to be expressed more effectively.

The third piece of music of the week was “Marvelous Grace of Our Loving Lord.” The congregation and choir could not express the wonderful verses well. Worshippers had to give thanks to Jesus Christ because He cleansed all their sins through

his cross, but they were indifferent at His grace and sang the song without any emotion and excitement. Next time, I will ask the choir and congregation to focus on the Lord in meditation while sing before worship starts.

Choir will sing the first verse and congregation will sing the second verse. For the third verse, solos will take over their own parts. For the last verse, the music minister will ask all the church members to stand while singing so that they can experience the passion of Christ on the cross.

The third piece of music of week seven was “Christ, the Lord, is Risen Today,” which was sung in an antipone style.¹ They did not express the resurrection of Jesus Christ well because of the song’s level of difficulty. Professional musicians usually use the antipone style while they sing easy songs with the audience. Because of the song’s apparent difficulty, I will choose an easier song instead of “Christ, the Lord, is Risen Today” so that congregation can follow the song more comfortably. The song will be “Low in the Grave He Lay.”

One last point I would like to suggest is about the youth group. They like to attend the Worship and Praise type of worship and respond to it, but do not like the traditional choir-centered worship. The first reason is that they could not understand the Korean language well. Another reason was that the Worship and Praise type of music is the type of music that they like. They think that the hymn-centered music’s beat is too slow and its verses are outdated.

If there is one more opportunity, I would like to provide a praise training program for the young group. The program will teach them not only gospel songs but also hymns so that they are accustomed to traditional hymn. It will also help them to approach to the older generation and to feel the moving of the Holy Spirit while singing hymns.

¹The choir sang first and the congregation followed them.

Theological Reflections

The primary purpose of the church is to worship God. Isaiah 43:7 explains the reason why Man worships God. The reason is that God created human beings for His glory. In Ephesians 1:3-14, Paul also argues that God deserves to receive worship because He gave all the believers all the spiritual blessings and that the believers are to give glory to God by worshipping Him. Therefore, God is the center of worship and praise. Worship reveals who God is, what He has done, and what He is doing right now.

When man worships God, he must have the biblical principles for worshipping God. The Old and New Testaments have a number of verses that emphasize worship and praise to God. In John 4:24, Jesus says that because God is a spirit, his worshipers must worship in spirit and in truth. According to the scripture, worshippers must worship God with all their hearts.

One type of praise which the Bible shows and supports is integrating of choral and congregational praise. 1 Chronicles 24-25 and the Book of Revelation clearly demonstrate this type praise. The act of integrating the praises of the choir and congregation induces all the worshippers to participate in all praises during worship and then to become united with all their hearts.

Personal Reflections

I suggest several points for all local churches when they want to improve their worship services upon adopting this new system. First, seminaries must provide curriculums to train students to be worship or praise leaders. They also have to provide special worship or praise seminars for local churches during summer break session. Seminaries teach worship but many of them do not teach worship music. They need to teach students both of these curriculums, which are practical and appropriate for the contemporary peoples.

Second, local churches need to hire professional music ministers. These local

churches are short of professional music ministers who are equipped with music theory and worship practice. Third, churches need to provide opportunities for new songs which youth and elder groups can sing together. The verses should be quoted from the Bible directly or indirectly.

Finally, local churches need to practice singing worship songs. This principle applies to all church members, including worship leaders, praise leaders, choir members, and even the congregation. Repeated practices result in good praise and worship. Worshippers have to praise God with all their hearts and time. They must consider the current worship could be the final one in their life-time. They should also recognize that they are standing before the Almighty God. The worship and praise, therefore, should not be stereo-typed or habitual.

Conclusion

Worship is greatly precious and is believers' privilege given by God. When the believers know who God is, what God did, and what God will do, they can have a good fellowship with God who is in their worship. Believers, therefore, have to focus on praising God and giving glory to Him so that the worship is one that pleases God. Worship service of most current churches focus on worship attendants, but worship is not to please congregation but to please God.

Contemporary worship music shows the theology of the day. It also functions to lead faith-community out, and it is a driving force to build the Kingdom of God and extend it. Worship music must change according to the theology of the day so that it is appropriate for the contemporaries. The author will continue to research it while keeping an eye on the changes of this age.

All the church members of Beautiful Gate Church, including the ministers, choir, and the congregation, are gradually growing accustomed to this new worship system. All of them are experiencing the moving of the Holy Spirit during the worship

service. Most church members have also changed from worship observers to worship participants through this new praise system of worship.

In conclusion, church worship is composed of two essential elements. One of them is God's word, which is delivered to believers through sermons. Another is the praise which believers give to God. When all church members sing songs in one heart for God and focus on only Him, worship can be improved and worshipper also encounter Him during worship. One of praise types which help the church to improve its worship is the integration of choral and congregational praises which, the author believes, the Heaven's worship in the Book of Revelation depicts.

RESEARCH INSTRUMENTS I (FOR CONGREGATION ONLY)

I. The personal questionnaire

1. Circle your gender: 1) male 2) female
2. Circle your age:
1) 20-29 2) 30-39 3) 40-49 5) 50-59 6) 60+
3. Circle the number of years since you came to faith in Christ:
1) 1-3 2) 4-6 3) 7-10 4) 10+
4. Circle the place you received Jesus Christ as your savior and Lord:
1) In Korea 2) another church in U.S.A
3) Beautiful Gate Church 4) others
5. Circle the years you have had a membership with Beautiful Gate Church:
1) 1-2 2) 3-4 3) 5-6 4) 7+
6. Circle your church worship attendance number a week:
1) only on Sunday 2) twice 3) three times 4) four or more
7. Are you satisfied with the worship at Beautiful Gate Church?
1) very much 2) so-so 3) I don't know 4) no 5) not at all
8. Are you satisfied with the praising during the worship services?
1) very much 2) so-so 3) I don't know 4) no 5) not at all

II. The second questionnaire about worship and praising

1. Do you know the biblical concepts of worship and praising?
1) very much 2) so-so 3) I don't know 4) no 5) not at all
2. How often do you go for sharing the gospel to others a week?
1) not at all 2) 1-2 times 3) 3-4 times 4) 5-6 times 5) 7 or more
3. Do you think that you can share the gospel with others through praising?
1) very much 2) so-so 3) I don't know 4) no 5) not at all
4. Do you experience a Christian fellowship with other through praising?
1) very much 2) so-so 3) I don't know 4) no 5) not at all
5. Do you think that you can learn doctrines of Christianity through praising?
1) very much 2) so-so 3) I don't know 4) no 5) not at all
6. Do you experience spiritual touches and thanks giving through praising?
1) very much 2) so-so 3) I don't know 4) no 5) not at all

7. How do you think that choir and congregation praise together during worship services?
1) very good 2) so-so 3) I don't know 4) no 5) not at all

RESEARCH INSTRUMENTS II (FOR CHOIR ONLY)

I. The first personal questionnaire

1. Circle your gender: 1) male 2) female
2. Circle your age:
1) 20-29 2) 30-39 3) 40-49 5) 50-59 6) 60+
3. Circle the number of years since you came to faith in Christ:
1) 1-3 2) 4-6 3) 7-10 4) 10+
4. Circle the place you received Jesus Christ as your savior and Lord:
1) In Korea 2) another church in U.S.A
3) Beautiful Gate Church 4) others
5. Circle the years you have had a membership of Beautiful Gate Church:
1) 1-2 2) 3-4 3) 5-6 4) 7+
6. Circle your church worship attendance number a week:
1) only on Sunday 2) twice 3) three times 4) four or more
7. Are you satisfied with the worship at Beautiful Gate Church?
1) very much 2) so-so 3) I don't know 4) no 5) not at all
8. Are you satisfied with the praising during the worship services?
1) very much 2) so-so 3) I don't know 4) no 5) not at all

II. The second questionnaire about worship and praising

1. Do you think that you were called for praising?
1) very much 2) so-so 3) I don't know 4) no 5) not at all
2. Do you pray and live a life which is filled with Holy Spirit everyday to live as a minister of praising?
1) very positive 2) so-so 3) I don't know 4) no 5) not at all
3. Do you attend worship services enthusiastically as a minister of praising?
1) very much 2) so-so 3) I don't know 4) no 5) not at all
4. Do you think that praising should be spiritual?
1) very much 2) so-so 3) I don't know 4) no 5) not at all
5. Do you think that praising is the most worthy one for our Lord Jesus Christ?
1) very positive 2) so-so 3) I don't know 4) no 5) not at all

6. Do you think that choir must be awakened and grow spiritually?
1) very much 2) so-so 3) I don't know 4) no 5) not at all
7. Do you think that through worship, we can ascribe the most precious thing to God?
1) very much 2) so-so 3) I don't know 4) no 5) not at all
8. Do you believe that choir is also one of the priests for God?
1) very much 2) so-so 3) I don't know 4) no 5) not at all
9. Do you think that the climax of life is to prepare the Sunday worship and give a sacrifice of praising to God?
1) very much 2) so-so 3) I don't know 4) no 5) not at all
10. Do you think that you are obeying to the word of God?
1) very positive 2) so-so 3) I don't know 4) no 5) not at all
11. Are you trying to grow spiritually?
1) very positive 2) so-so 3) I don't know 4) no 5) not at all
12. Do you think that you have a musical gift?
1) very much 2) so-so 3) I don't know 4) no 5) not at all
13. Are you trying to improve your musical gift?
1) very much 2) so-so 3) I don't know 4) no 5) not at all
14. How long do you remember the songs during worship services?
1) very long 2) short time 3) I don't know 4) no 5) not at all
15. Do you experience spiritual touches and joys through praising?
1) very much 2) so-so 3) I don't know 4) no 5) not at all
16. Do you experience the presence of God during worship services?
1) very much 2) so-so 3) I don't know 4) no 5) not at all
17. Do you know the biblical concepts of worship and praising?_
1) very much 2) so-so 3) I don't know 4) no 5) not at all
18. How often do you go for sharing the gospel to others a week?
1) not at all 2) 1-2 times 3) 3-4 times 4) 5-6 times 5) 7 or more

RESEARCH INSTRUMENTS I (FOR STAFF ONLY)

I. The personal questionnaire

1. Circle your gender: 1) male 2) female
2. Circle your age:
1) 20-29 2) 30-39 3) 40-49 5) 50-59 6) 60+
3. Circle the number of years since you came to faith in Christ:
1) 1-3 2) 4-6 3) 7-10 4) 10+
4. Circle the place you received Jesus Christ as your savior and Lord:
1) In Korea 2) another church in U.S.A
3) Beautiful Gate Church 4) others
5. Circle the years you have had a membership of Beautiful Gate Church:
1) 1-2 2) 3-4 3) 5-6 4) 7+
6. Circle your church worship attendance number a week:
1) only on Sunday 2) twice 3) three times 4) four or more
7. Are you satisfied with the worship at Beautiful Gate Church?
1) very much 2) so-so 3) I don't know 4) no 5) not at all
8. Are you satisfied with the praising during the worship services?
1) very much 2) so-so 3) I don't know 4) no 5) not at all

II. The second questionnaire about worship and praising

1. Do you think that all ministers and staff must be involved in church music?
1) very positive 2) so-so 3) I don't know 4) no 5) not at all
2. Do you think that music minister should plan and perform musical events based on the biblical theology?
1) very positive 2) so-so 3) I don't know 4) no 5) not at all
3. Do you think that ministers must be aware of the elements which affect church music?
1) very positive 2) so-so 3) I don't know 4) no 5) not at all
4. Do you think that the current worship system needs to be adjusted?
1) very much 2) so-so 3) I don't know 4) no 5) not at all
5. Do you know the biblical concepts of worship and praising?_
1) very much 2) so-so 3) I don't know 4) no 5) not at all

6. How often do you go for sharing the gospel to others a week?
1) not at all 2) 1-2 times 3) 3-4 times 4) 5-6 times 5) 7 or more

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ABSTRACT

IMPROVING CORPORATE WORSHIP BY INTEGRATING CHORAL AND CONGREGATIONAL PRAISE AT BEAUTIFUL GATE CHURCH IN ANNADALE, VIRGINIA

Min Hee Lee, D. Min.
The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2012
Faculty Supervisor: Dr. Sanghee M. Ahn

The purpose of this project is to improve corporate worship by integrating choral and congregational praise at Beautiful Gate Church in Annandale, Virginia.

Chapter 1 presents the purpose of this project and describes the goals of the project. It also describes the ministry context of Beautiful Gate Church. This chapter also presents the rationale for the project to integrate coral and congregational praise.

Chapter 2 examines the biblical and theological supports for the project. Several passages (for example, Gen 4:2-8, John 4:20-24, and Ps 22:3) would be examined in detail. These passages put emphasis on the importance of worship and the roles of praising for the Christian belief.

Chapter 3 deals with the theoretical and sociological issues concerning this project. This chapter examines the contemporary culture and music and their characteristics. It also discusses the problems of church worship and praising under the contemporary culture and music. It evaluates the current worship and praising models and suggests an alternative style.

Chapter 4 outlines the methodology for the project with a detailed procedure. A music minister gives some seminars on the biblical worship and praising and guide the choir and congregation to practice for an integrating praising. The purpose of this chapter

is to give some guidelines when someone applies this project to a different setting to improve his church's worship. Chapter 5 evaluates the effectiveness of the project.

VITA

Min Hee Lee

PERSONAL

Born: December 2, 1954, Yesan, Choong Nam, Korea
Married: Un Lee, February 5, 1983

EDUCATIONAL

B.A. Seoul Presbyterian College and Theological Seminary, Seoul, 1990
M.Div. Washington Baptist University, Annandale, Virginia, 2004
Th.M. Washington Baptist University, Annandale, Virginia, 2006
Th. D Virginia Christian University, Chantly, Virginia 2009

MINISTERIAL EXPERIENCE

Choir Conductor/ Music Director, Dongkwang Presbyterian Church, Seoul,
Korea, 1980-1999
Music Minister, Hosanna Baptist Church, Marriottsville, Maryland, 2000-2010
Music Minister/ Preacher, Beautiful Gate Church, Annandale, Virginia, 2011-

